

Battle Through the Heavens

(斗破苍穹)

Chapter

001-099

Tian Can Tu Dou

(天蚕土豆)

Story Description:

In a land where no magic is present. A land where the strong makes the rules and weak has to obey. A land filled with alluring treasures and beauty yet also filled with unforeseen danger. Xiao Yan, who has shown talents none had seen in decades, suddenly three years ago lost everything, his powers, his reputation, and his promise to his mother. What sorcery has caused him to lose all of his powers? And why has his fiancee suddenly shown up?

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

Chapter 1: Genius No More

‘Dou Zhi Li1, 3rd stage!’

Facing the Magical Testing Monument as it displayed the 5 big hurtful words, the youth stood expressionless, lips curled in a small self-ridiculing smile. He tightly clenched his fist and because of the strength used, his slightly sharp fingernails dug deep into the palm of his hand, bringing brief moments of pain.

“Xiao Yan, Dou Zhi Li, 3rd stage! Rank: Low!” Beside the Magical Testing Monument, a middle-aged man looked at the results on the monument and announced them with an indifferent voice.

Immediately after the middle-aged man finished speaking, without much surprise, the people in the square started a commotion, ridiculing him.

“3rd stage? Hmmhmm, as expected. This ‘genius’ has once again taken a step back.”

“Ai, this piece of trash really disgraced his entire clan.”

“If his father wasn’t the clan leader, this kind of trash would already have been kicked out of the clan. Nobody would care about him, and there wouldn’t be such a thing as leeching off the clan home.”

“How could the once famous genius of Wu Tan Cheng² fall to become like this over the past few years?”

“Who knows? Maybe he did something unforgivable and caused the gods to get angry.”

The ridicule and laughter directed at him came from all directions and resonated in the motionless youth’s ears, as if piercing his heart. He could not help but breathe heavily.

He raised his head to reveal a delicate and immature face, jet black eyes glancing past the people of his age that ridiculed him as well. His lips, which were previously full of self-ridicule, turned to fill with bitterness instead.

“These people, were they always this cold? Or was it because three years ago they smiled humbly to congratulate me, and now they wanted to take it back?” Smiling bitterly, Xiao Yan turned around and silently walked back to the group of people. His lonesome figure seemed to be unable to fit in with the surroundings.

“Next up, Xiao Mei!”

Hearing the tester’s voice, a teenage girl quickly ran up from in the crowd. The moment she got on stage, the murmurings and discussions quietened down and every pair of fiery eyes were locked on her face.

The teenage girl wasn’t more than 14 years old. Although her beauty wasn’t immediately evident, her small childish face combined with her innocence captured the attention of the audience.

She quickly stepped forward and put her tiny hands on the black stone monument. She then closed her eyes gently.

As the girl closed her eyes, the monument shined brightly once again.

‘Dou Zhi Li, 7th stage!’

“Xiao Mei, Dou Zhi Li, 7th stage! Rank: High!”

“Yeh!” Hearing the tester read out the result, the teen girl smiled proudly.

“Tsk tsk, 7th stage Dou Zhi Li. How impressive! At this rate, in three years she’ll be named a true Dou Zhe³ already.”

“She really fits the name of the clan’s seedling.”

Hearing the unanimous praise coming from the crowd, the girl’s smile turned even wider. Vanity, the temptation that so many girls are unable to resist...

While chatting with her fellow sister members, her line of sight weaved through the surrounding people and landed on a lonesome figure away from them.

Furrowing her brows for a while, she finally decided against walking over. Between the two of them was already a huge gap. Looking at Xiao

Yan's performance these past few years, by the time the Adulthood Ceremony comes, he would only be able to place at the lower tier clan member ranks. She, however, with her brilliance, would become the clan's very important and thus well-nurtured fighter. There would be no limit to her future.

"Ai..." An inexplicable sigh emerged from her. Xiao Mei thought back to the youth from three years ago, bursting with energy and pride. At 4 he started practicing, and at 10 he achieved the 9th stage Dou Zhi Li. At 11 he broke the 10th stage Dou Zhi Li barrier and condensed his Dou Zhi Qi Zu⁴ successfully. He became the youngest Dou Zhe in the clan since the past 100 years.

At that time, his self-confidence as well as immeasurable power attracted countless young teens which of course, included Xiao Mei.

However, the path of a genius was always winding. Three years ago, this genius youngster whose fame reached the absolute top, received what could possibly be the cruellest blow. The hard work he put into accumulating and condensing the Dou Zhi Qi Zu over the past ten years had, in just one night, vanished into nothingness. All the Dou Zhi Li in his body slowly dissipated with time and instead, pity for him grew.

As a result of losing his Dou Zhi Li, his physical strength decreased as well.

From the position of a genius, in one night he fell below the average person. This kind of blow made the youth lose his will to carry on training. The reverence once associated with this lad had slowly changed into disdain and ridicule.

Standing so high up, and falling right down – this kind of fall might just be one that he could never recover from.

"Next, Xiao Xun Er!"

Among the commotion, the tester's voice sounded yet again.

Following the calling of this highly reputable name, the group of people quietened down immediately. Every single gaze turned.

At the centerpoint of attention was a teen girl clad in a purple dress, elegantly standing there. Her calm, tender and immaculate face was completely unaffected by the many gazes of the crowd.

Her calm and indifferent attitude could be compared to the blooming of a lotus. At such a young age, she already had the air of a refined lady. It would be hard to imagine how she would affect the city and the nation once she grew up.

This purple dress girl, if compared to Xiao Mei in terms of beauty, was clearly several leagues above. It's no wonder the crowd would have this kind of actions.

Taking small, graceful steps, the girl named Xiao Xun Er walked up in front of the stone monument. She stretched her small hand out and the purple sleeve mixed with black and gold threads fell down her arm, revealing a delicate snow-white wrist. She touched the monument lightly.

In the silence, the monument shone once more.

"Dou Zhi Li, 9th stage! Rank: High!"

Looking at the words on the monument, the entire square fell into deep silence.

"..... She really reached the 9th stage, how frightening! The position of the youngest high rank in the clan has been taken, without a shred of doubt, by Miss Xun Er!" After the silence, several teens couldn't help but wolf whistle, their eyes full of respect and awe.

Dou Zhi Li was essential towards being a Dou Zhe. Dou Zhi Li is split into 10 different stages, and when the body acquires 10 stages of Dou Zhi Li, it can better condense the Dou Zhi Qi Zu, becoming a well-respected Dou Zhe!

In the crowd of people, Xiao Mei stared at the purple dress girl in front of the monument with a little jealousy.

Looking at the results on the monument, the middle-aged tester who would normally be indifferent smiled, faced her and congratulated her: "Miss Xun Er, half a year later, you should be able to condense the Dou Qi

Zhi Zu⁵. If you succeed, you'll be a Dou Zhe at the age of 14, the second person to do so in the Xiao clan.

Of course, the second person. First would be the fallen genius, Xiao Yan.

"Thanks." The teen girl nodded her head lightly, her calm face showing a little happiness because of his praise. She quietly turned, and in the midst of the crowd's attention, slowly walked to the downtrodden youth in the back of the group.

"Brother Xiao Yan." At the youth's side, the teen girl stopped. She faced Xiao Yan and bowed respectfully. Her beautiful and gentle face showed a elegant smile which would make the surrounding girls jealous.

"What qualifications do I have right now for you to call me that?" He faced the girl that could be considered the clan's radiant pearl and said bitterly. She, after being down-hearted for an extremely short while, continued to maintain her respect.

"Brother Xiao Yan, you once said to Xun Er⁶ before – to take on anything, one must first be able to let go. One is only truly free when he can take on and let go easily⁷." Xiao Xun Er said gently, her smiling face full of warmth.

"Haha, truly free? I only know how to say it. Look at me now, do I look like a free person? This world wasn't mine to begin with." Xiao Yan laughed at himself, saying dispiritedly.

Facing Xiao Yan's somber mood, Xiao Xun Er's fine brows furrowed a little, and she said seriously: "Brother Xiao Yan, though I don't know what's happening to you, Xun Er honestly believes that you will stand again and reclaim your lost glory and respect..." She stopped for a moment, her white tender face reddening a little. "Back then, there were a lot of people who were attracted to you..."

"Haha..." Hearing the girl's whole-hearted truth, he laughed awkwardly but didn't say anything else. Other people would be swayed by it, but he did not have the qualifications nor the mood. Instead, he silently turned around and walked away from the square.

Standing still and facing the lonely back of the youth, she hesitated for a while before chasing after him and walking side-by-side with him. Meanwhile, from behind a jealous wolf whistle sounded(?).

*

斗之力, which is the internal fighting energy or qi that wuxia often refer to. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qi> for more information. ↵

乌坦城, the city's name. ↵

斗者, a fighter who has condensed their 10 stages of Dou Zhi Li, this is one of the ranks in the hierarchy of DPCQ. ↵

斗之气旋, which is the ‘channels’ that the qi flows in, I think. ↵

斗气之旋, not sure why the wording is changed. ↵

She refers to herself in 3rd person. ↵

要能放下，才能拿起，提放自如，是自在人 is an important quote that came from the author of DPCQ that has started gaining a little fame. ↵

Chapter 2: Dou Qi Continent

The moon was like a silver plate and the stars filled the sky.

At the summit of the cliff, Xiao Yan lay on the grass and in his mouth was a strand of green grass. He chewed it slightly and let the bitterness spread into his mouth slowly.

He raised his white palm and put it in front of him, blocking the moon and only letting some moonlight pass through the gaps between his fingers. He looked at the giant circular silver moon in the sky.

“Ai...” Thinking back the testing in the afternoon, Xiao Yan sighed lightly. He lazily pulled his hand back and rested both hands on his head. He looked absent-minded.

“15 years already, huh?” a soft voice that suddenly was spat out from the young teen without any warning.

In Xiao Yan’s mind, there was a secret that only he himself knew: He wasn’t a person from this world. More accurately, his soul wasn’t from this world. He was from a deep blue star called Earth. As for unexplainable mystery of why he would be here, he himself had no clue. However, after living here for some time, he slowly realised: He passed through to the other side!

As he grew older, he slowly came to understand bits and pieces of this continent.

This continent was called the Dou Qi Continent. On the continent, there wasn’t many tales of magic users and their effects, but rather, Dou Qi was the main star.

On this big piece of land, the training of Dou Qi had become commonplace after the hard work of countless individuals who continued to train beyond generations, expanding the knowledge surrounding Dou Qi all the way to the top. Dou Qi and mankind are one and the same in everyday life and as such, Dou Qi is extremely important in the continent. It could be called irreplaceable!

As the number of levels in Dou Qi kept increasing, so did the number of ways to train it. Some were better than others, as expected.

After going through a system of analysis, the Dou Qi rankings in the Dou Qi Continent got split into four different classes – Tian, Di, Xuan, Huang.

And every class was split further into Beginner, Medium and High ranks!

The Dou Qi techniques you learned also determined how strong you would be. For example, if a person practiced a Xuan class Medium rank technique, he would naturally be stronger than a person who practiced a Huang class High rank technique.

In the Dou Qi Continent, to differentiate the strong from the weak, there are 3 criterias that need to be looked at.

First, and also the most important, is your natural body strength. If a person only has a 1 star level of strength, even if he practiced the Tian class High rank techniques, he wouldn't be able to beat a Huang class Combat Master.

Next is technique level. If two people of the same innate strength were to battle, the one with the better technique will obviously win.

Lastly is Dou Ji1.

Dou Ji is a special kind of skill that is used when controlling Dou Qi and in the land of Dou Qi, Dou Ji is also separated into Tian, Di, Xuan, Huang.

Dou Qi in the continent speaks for itself, but Dou Ji is different. Almost everyone starts off with a Dou Ji class of Huang. If you wanted to learn more advance control skills, you would need to join a sect or enrol in a Dou Qi school.

Of course, there are some who, by chance, managed to learn the skills that others before have left behind, or those who have compatible Dou Ji skills. For these people, their combat level might be slightly higher than normal.

Relying on these 3 aspects, you can determine who is strong and who is

weak. All in all, if you managed to learn a high level Dou Qi technique, the benefits in the future would be enormous.

However, high level Dou Qi techniques are really hard to come by as a commoner. Those that are open to the public are normal, Huang class techniques. For those bigger clans or small sects, Xuan class techniques are the norm. For example, in Xiao Yan's clan, their highest level technique was only practiceable by the clan leader – Lion Wind Strike2. It was a wind style Xuan class Medium rank technique.

Above the Xuan class would be the Di class, but this kind of high-level techniques might only obtainable by a powerful country-like organisation.

As for the Tian class, in a hundred years, it hasn't appeared once.

As previously stated, commoners trying to get a high-level technique is like trying to climb a mountain without gear. However, nothing is absolute. In the world of Dou Qi, there are thousands of clans. In the North, there are people referred to as 'Unbeatable'. They fused their soul with wild animals and became barbarians. In the South, there are smart and talented high class beast spirit clans, and even the strange and infamous underworld people.

Because of the vastness of the continent, there are bound to be cases of nameless figures who, by chance, happened upon a miracle that made them strong. Or, perhaps, there might be people who are bound by fate to discover strong techniques. In the land of Dou Qi, there is one famous sentence: If you find yourself stuck in a ditch or forsaken by the world, don't panic. Take two steps forward and maybe you'll find yourself stronger than ever before.

Of course, though this line isn't false, in the thousand years of history in the continent, there aren't many stories of people getting strong by random chance.

As a result of this, every day, there are countless individuals who try to break through and discover a new skill or technique, but instead only return with a broken hip or leg.

All in all, this continent is full of mysteries and miracles.

To access the vault of secret Dou Qi techniques, you must at least be a full-fledged Dou Zhe to meet the basic requirements. For Xiao Yan, it seemed so far away.

Puu Xiao Yan spat the grass out and quickly stood up and made a maniacal face. He faced the sky and shouted: "God damn it! How could I be played for a fool like this?"

In his past life, Xiao Yan was a mediocre, average commoner. Wealth, fame and beauty seemed to run parallel to his life, never intersecting it. Then, when he came to this continent, Xiao Yan was shocked. Because of a second set of experiences, his spirit became much stronger than the average person.

It must be known that in the Dou Qi continent, your spirit is decided upon at birth. Maybe, as you grew older, it would strengthen a slight bit, but there is no known technique to train your spirit to be stronger.

It was Xiao Yan's strong spirit that gave him his talent, as well as his fame as a genius.

For an average person, if they were told that they could be a genius, there's little doubt that they would claim their fame and live the high life. For the run-of-the-mill person like Xiao Yan, when he started training his Dou Zhi Qi, the temptation of being able to rise to fame would be unbearable. Of course he wouldn't choose to stay hidden and continue to train!

If there wasn't any accident, Xiao Yan could perhaps grow even more with his 'genius' label. Unfortunately, at 11, his label was stolen from him and in one night, a genius turned into a piece of trash.

After shouting at the top of his lungs for a while, Xiao Yan finally calmed down and his face turned calm again. No matter how angry he got, he wouldn't be able to get his strength back.

Bitterly shaking his head, Xiao Yan felt miserable. He had no clue what happened to his body, and nothing seemed out of the ordinary. His spirit was growing as he aged, as expected. His absorption of Dou Zhi Qi was also extraordinarily fast. It was faster than the strongest fighter from a few

years back. All these factors should have meant that Xiao Yan was a natural genius, but all the Dou Zhi Qi that he absorbed seemed to be completely gone. His self-esteem took a big hit and he could only feel depressed.

Taking another deep breath, Xiao Yan raised his hand. On his finger was a black ring of simple design. The material used to make it was unknown. On it were some markings as well. This was the only present his late mother gave to him before she passed. He started wearing it since the age of 4 and even now, 10 years later, he was still wearing. It was a precious gift from his mother and Xiao Yan treasured it dearly. He rubbed the ring and said bitterly: "These few years, I've really let Mother down, huh?"

Sighing deeply, Xiao Yan quickly stood up and turned around, saying to the black figure from the woods: "Father, why have you come?"

Though his Dou Zhi Qi was only 3rd stage, his spiritual awareness was akin to that of a 5 star Dou Zhe, perhaps even better. While thinking about his mother, he felt a sudden disturbance from the woods.

"Ah ah, Yan Er3. It's already quite late. Why are you still here?" From within the cluster of trees, after a moment of silence, a tender voice sounded.

The trees shaked a little and a middle-aged man jumped out, face smiling widely. His eyes were locked on his son under the moonlight.

The middle-aged man was wearing an expensive looking grey tunic. He walked with pride and dignity and his face showed it. He was the Xiao clan leader, as well as Xiao Yan's father, a 5 star Dou Shi - Xiao Zhan!

"Father, why have you not returned to rest yet?" Facing the middle-aged man, Xiao Yan's smile thickened. Although he had another set of memories, when he was born, the person before him treated him as with love and care. When he lost his power and spirit, the love did not lessen but grew instead. This poked at Xiao Yan's heart, making Xiao Yan recognise him as his father.

"Yan Er, are you still thinking about what happened this afternoon?" Taking a big step forward, Xiao Zhan smiled again.

“Ha ha, what’s there to think about? It’s within my expectations.” Xiao Yan shaked his head and forced a smile.

“Ai...” Looking at Xiao Yan’s tender face, Xiao Zhan let out a sigh. The both of them sinked into silence for a while, before Xiao Zhan said: “Yan Er, you’re 15 now, aren’t you?”

“Yes, father.”

“Just one more year... and you have to attend the Adulthood Ceremony...” Xiao Zhan said.

“Yes, father. Only a year left.” Xiao Yan’s fist clenched for a while before he replied. He was extremely clear what the Adulthood Ceremony meant. Once the ceremony had past, for the Xiao Yan that didn’t train, he would be subject to the criteria of searching for Dou Qi techniques. Because he was so weak, he would be sent to do a normal job in the other parts of the Xiao clan. This was a clan rule and even if the clan leader was his father, he would not be able to do anything about it.

If one didn’t reach Dou Zhe by the age of 25, the clan would abadon them.

“Sorry, Yan Er. If you don’t reach the Dou Zhi Qi 7th stage by next year, I can’t do anything to help you, no matter how much I want to. In this clan, I’m not the sole decision maker. There’s also those old geezers waiting for me to make a mistake...” Looking at the peaceful Xiao Yan, Xiao Zhan voiced guiltily.

“Father, I will continue to work hard. One year later, I’ll definitely reach the Dou Zhi Qi 7th stage!” Xiao Yan reassured his father.

“4 stages in 1 year? Ahh... if it were me from before, it may have been possible, but now... I might not have much of a chance...” Though Xiao Yan was trying to reassure his father, he himself was bitter about it.

Knowing full well Xiao Yan’s position, Xiao Zhan could only answer with a sigh. He knew that 4 stages of Dou Zhi Qi in a year was extremely difficult. He gently patted Xiao Yan’s head, and smiled, saying: “It’s getting quite late, you should go back and get some rest. Tomorrow, the clan has a

guest and you shouldn't miss the ceremony."

"Guest? Who?" Xiao Yan asked, full of curiosity.

"You'll find out tomorrow." Xiao Zhan winked at the restless Xiao Yan, leaving with a big smile on his face.

"Don't you worry, father. I'll work really hard." Xiao Yan rubbed the simple ring while raising his head and whispering.

Just when Xiao Yan raised his head, the black ring on his finger suddenly lit up with a mysterious glow and flashed. Blinking, Xiao Yan realised it wasn't a person...

*

斗技, meaning combat skills or something akin to that. ↵

狂獅怒罡 guessing the meaning here. ↵

炎儿, the first letter being Yan, Xiao Yan's name. Used to refer to someone very close or someone you love dearly. Usually used by parents to address their children. ↵

Chapter 3: Guests

A young man was meditating on his bed. In front of him, his hands were clasped in a weird yet relaxed manner. His chest peacefully rose and fell with the rhythm of his breath. Everything was just... so natural! With every breath he took, a pale white stream of what seemed to be air darted into the young man's nose and mouth, squeezing into his body and reshaping it.

As the young man was meditating, a strange yet dim sparkle appeared for a brief moment on the plain black ring that he wore on his finger ...

"Huuuu..." The young man slowly let out his breath and opened his eyes, blinking. A pale white awn flashed across his black pupils, that was the Dou Qi that had just been absorbed but not yet completely refined.

"It took such great effort to get that Dou Qi, but... fuck, it's disappearing again! No, no please noooo..." The young man tried desperately to keep the disappearing Dou Qi from slipping away but to no avail. As the last sliver of Dou Qi left his body, the young man's face changed from being calm to one of anger and despair and his voice rose with fury.

He curled his hands into fists and was rapidly clenching and unclenching them. Eventually, his visage transited from extreme anger to a forced grin. After all, there was nothing he could do about it. Wearily, he dragged his body off the bed and stretched his numb legs. With only Dou Qi of a 3rd Stage, such menial matters were always present.

After having done a few exercises in his plain room, an old, wizened voiced sounded outside of his door: "Young master, the clan leader has requested your presence in the hall."

The young man was the third son of the clan header, Xiao Yan. Above him were two brothers, but they had already left the clan in search of adventures. Only at the end of each year would they come back and meet their family. Overall however, the two brothers were extremely nice to their little brother, Xiao Yan, even when he fell from being a genius to a piece of trash.

“Coming!” Xiao Yan changed his clothes and went out. Outside of his room was an elder in a green robe. “Let’s go!”

Looking at the young man’s fresh face, the elder nodded his head. But when he turned around, his eyes showed a flash of regret. If young master had his former talent, he probably would be a great Dou Zhe, such a waste...

The elder and the young man crossed through the back yard and finally arrived solemnly at the welcoming hall. After politely knocking, the two softly went in.

The hall is quite large, but there were many people already in it. At the head of the hall were Xiao Zhan and three emotionless elders. They were the clan elders and had equal importance to the Clan leader.

On the left, below the four were other elders from the clan. These elders didn’t hold as much power as the clan elders but nevertheless, they had quite a bit of say and weren’t pushovers. Besides these elders were young men that had shown promise and talent.

On the other side was three strangers, looks like they are the people that Xiao Zhan foretold last night.

The young man’s eyes quickly swept through the strangers. Of the three, there was an elder wearing a moon white outfit. Although the elder was all smiles, his tiny eyes were full of energy, restlessly scanning the room. Xiao Yan’s sight dipped lower, stopping at the elder’s chest. On his chest was a silver moon and besides the moon were seven shiny stars.

7 Star Da Dou Shi! This guy’s a 7 star Da Dou Shi? Incredibile. Xiao Yao could barely refrain from gasping at the elder. The elder was stronger than his own father, in fact, he was two whole stars stronger.

Anyone that became a Da Dou Shi was at least a power to be reckoned with. With that kind of strength, most places would probably rush for recruitment. To be able to see such a powerful person, it’s not surprising that Xiao Yan was shocked.

Beside the elder were a young couple. They were also wearing moon

white robes. The male was about 20 years old and had a handsome face, coupled with a strong build. He was definitely the ideal type for any girl. Of course, the most important thing was, on his chest were 5 golden stars. This represented the strength of the young man: 5 star Dou Zhe!

To be able to become a 5 star Dou Zhe at the age of 20 definitely shows the un-normal talent of the young man.

With a handsome face and decent strength, this young man, not only became the target of stares from young girls in the clan, even Xiao Mei occasionally sent glances to him.

But, the looks that the girls gave had no effect on the young man. His entire focus was concentrated on the young girl beside him...

The young girl's age was similar to Xiao Yan which made Xiao Yan flinch. Her beauty even rivaled Xiao Mei's, no, she was prettier than Xiao Mei. In the entire clan, probably only Xiao Xun Er could rival her. No wonder the guys in this clan chased girls outside of the clan.

On the intricate ear of the young girl was a green jade earrings. As she moved around, the pieces of jade clinked together, chirping a beautiful melody and adding a hint of royalty to the girl...

In addition, on the developing chest of the girl were 3 golden stars.

A 3-Star Dou Zhe, This girl... if she didn't use any special methods, she must be an incredible genius! Xiao Yao's heart fell, she had talent rivalling his former talent! But Xiao Yao forced his eyes away from the cold beauty. No matter what, beneath Xiao Yao's immature appearance was a mature soul. Although the girl was very pretty, he kept himself from acting like a drooling slob.

Xiao Yan's actions caused a slight tension within the girl. Although she wasn't the kind that had an entire universe revolving around her, her beauty and appearance wasn't bad. Xiao Yan's random glance over her was a first for her.

"Father, three elders!" Walking quickly, Xiao Yan courteously greeted the Xiao Zhan and the three elders.

“Haha, Yan Er, you came! Here, come sit.” Seeing Xiao Yan arrival, Xiao Zhan stopped talking to his guests and nodded in the direction of Xiao Yan, waving his hand to indicate for Xiao Yan to take a seat.

With a slight smile, Xiao Yan ignored the lazy, almost hateful gazes from the three clan elders and searched for his seat. But, he was surprised at the result, he didn’t have a seat...

Hahhh, my position in the clan is just sinking lower and lower. It was better before, but now, they even embarrass me in front of guests, these old geezers... Xiao Yao ridiculed himself silently, in his mind, he shook his head as if it could block the emotions that welled up within him.

Looking at the motionless Xiao Yan, the young clan members let out soft, mocking laughter, showing their happiness at seeing Xiao Yan be made a fool.

Finally, Xiao Zhan realized Xiao Yan’s predicament. A look of anger flashed across his face before being replaced with a bent eyebrow: “Second elder, you...”

“Ohh, really sorry. I can’t believe that I forgot about young master. Hehe, I’ll go get someone to prepare a chair!” The yellow robed elder smiled at the staring Xiao Zhan. He patted his forehead in an act of self-criticism but the belittling look in his eyes didn’t fade.

“Brother Xiao Yan, come sit here!” The clear voice of a girl rang across the hall.

The three elders tensed, their gaze shifting to Xun Er in the corner. Their mouths twitched but none of them said anything...

In the corner, Xiao Xun Er closed the thick book in her lap, and blinked at Xiao Yan.

Looking at Xiao Xun Er’s smiling face, Xiao Yan froze for a second. Quickly, he recovered and after touching his nose, he walked towards Xun Er under the envious gazes of the surrounding clan members and after what seemed like the longest few seconds, he plopped next to Xun Er.

Xiao Yan whispered: “Thanks, you’ve rescued me again.”

Xiao Xun Er lightly smiled, two small dimples appearing on her face. Her slender fingers flipped open the book in front of her. Even though she was extremely young, there was an air of intellectuality around her. After scanning through the page, Xun Er suddenly complained: "Brother Xiao Yan, you haven't sat beside me, alone, for three years now, right?"

"Uhh...you're a genius in the clan, isn't it simple for you if you want friends?" Looking at the resentful face of Xun Er, Xiao Yan drily laughed.

"But the thing is, a certain someone snuck into my room every night when I was 4 to 6. And then that certain someone used a clumsy technique and weak Dou Zi Qi to strengthen my bones and

meridians. Every time, the same person would get himself sweating profusely before leaving. Brother Xiao Yan, do you know who he is?" Xun Er paused for a moment and suddenly tilted her head, and smiled towards Xiao Yan.

"Uhh... how, how am I supposed to know? I was so young back then, in fact, I could barely walk, how would I know?" Xiao Yan's heart began to beat violently. Forcing open a smile, Xiao Yan guilty turned his gaze to the center of the hall.

"Hehe..." Looking at Xiao Yan's reaction, a slight smile floated on Xiao Xun Er's face. Her sight moved back to the book on her lap and as if talking to herself, she said: "Even though I know that, that person did it in goodwill, I'm a girl right? How can I let someone carelessly touch me? If I ever find out who did it, hmpf..."

Xiao Yan's mouth began to twitch violently, keeping his sight straight, he shut his mouth tight...

Chapter 4: Faction of the Misty Clouds

In the main hall, Xiao Zhan and the three clan elders were talking excitedly with the strange elder. The guest seemed to have something weighing on his mind, yet every time when it seemed as if he was about to broach the subject, he would swallow back the words and change the topic. Each time he did this, the delicate girl next to him would give the elder a subtle yet firm glance...

After listening on to their conversation for a while, Xiao Yan was bored by their conversation and his head was slowly drooping...

"Brother Xiao Yan, do you know who they are?" Right when Xiao Yan was about to fall asleep from boredom, Xun Er who was beside him opened her ancient book and asked Xiao Yan.

"Do you know?" Xiao Yan curiously looked at Xun Er.

"Did you see the symbol of a silver sword with the clouds on the cuff of their robes?" Xun Er said with a light smile.

"Oh?" Xiao Yan looked towards the cuffs of the three and indeed, there he clearly saw the embroidered symbol of a sword sparkling in the clouds!

"They are from the Faction of Misty Clouds?" Xiao Yan asked in bewilderment.

Even though Xiao Yan had never gone out into the real world, he had read from books about this faction. Xiao Yan's clan lived in a city named Wu Tan City which was part of the Jia Ma Empire. Even though this city is listed as being one of the bigger cities within Jia Ma Empire, it was still dwarfed by the size of the empire, despite having the Magic Monsters Mountain Range behind it.

Within the city itself, Xiao Yan's clan was the biggest. Besides the Xiao Clan, there were two other clans that competed with the Xiao Clan, but even after 24 years of blood and strife, they were unable to overtake the Xiao clan...

If the Xiao Clan was the strongest power in Wu Tan City, then the

Faction of Misty Clouds would be the strongest power in the entire Jia Ma Empire! The difference between the Xiao Clan and the Faction of Misty Clouds was enormous, to the point where Xiao Yan's father Xiao Zhan, who normally kept a strict and harsh face, was extremely respectful in front of these guests.

"Why are they here?" Xiao Yan whispered.

Xun Er's slim fingers paused, "Maybe it's related to you, Brother Xiao Yan..."

"Me? But I don't have any relationships with them!?" Hearing Xun Er's response, Xiao Yan paused before shaking his head and whispering back.

"Do you know the name of the girl up there?" Xun Er glanced at the girl.

"No, do you?" Xian Yan furrowed his brows as he examined the face of the girl Xun Er pointed out. He cannot recall ever having seen her before.

"She's Nalan Yanran!" A curious expression floated on Xun Er's face.

Xiao Yan stiffened, "Nalan Yanran? The granddaughter of Nalan Jie, the Lionheart commander of Jia Ma Empire? She's... she's my fiancée that was set between our families, before I was born?"

"Hehe, grandfather and Nalan Jie were like blood brothers and at that time, you and Nalan Yanran were born around the same time, so the two decided that you guys would get married. But, unfortunately, after you were born for three years, grandfather died in a fight with a clan enemy and as time passed, Xiao Clan's relation with the Nalan family became weaker..." Xun Er paused and looked at Xiao Yan who was absorbed in Xun Er's story, "Nalan Jie is not only arrogant, he also puts extreme emphasis on promises. The marriage was decided by him so even though your name has been quite bad the past few years, he has never once thought of annulling the marriage..."

"That geezer sure is quite obstinate..." Xiao Yan smiled.

"Nalan Jie has the final say in all matters within the family so even though he really is very fond of his granddaughter, no one in the family has stepped up to oppose the marriage..." Xun Er's beautiful eyes lightly

glanced at Xiao Yan before continuing, “But 5 years ago, Nalan Yanran became a student under the faction leader of Misty Clouds. In these 5 years, Nalan Yanran demonstrated incredible talent. When a person has enough power to change the path of their life, they would try their hardest to change things that they don’t like and unfortunately, she absolutely hates her promised marriage with Xiao Yan brother!”

“You’re saying... that she came to CANCEL the marriage?”

Xiao Yan’s face darkened. At this moment he was furious, not because Nalan Yanran did not want him as her husband but rather, because Nalan Yanran is trying to cancel the marriage with the entire clan present! If that happens then his father would lose much of his dignity and respect within the clan!

Xiao Yan slowly breathed in, the cold air calming his raging thoughts. Within his sleeve, Xiao Yan curled his fist, thinking, if I was a Dou Shi, who would dare to trample over my dignity?

It was true, if Xiao Yan was a Dou Shi, then, even if Nalan Yanran had the backing of the Faction of Misty Clouds, she would not be able to do such a thing. A 15 year old Dou Shi,, there were only a few that had such high accomplishments in the entire history of Dou Qi Mainland. And the few people that were at that level when they were that young are now some of the most influential people in the entire Dou Qi world.

A small fragile hand cleverly evaded Xiao Yan’s sleeves and held onto Xiao Yan’s hands. Xun Er softly said, “Brother Xiao Yan, if she really cancels the marriage, then that’s her own loss. I believe that in a couple of years, she will be regretting her decisions today!”

“Regret?” Xiao Yan sneered. “With my current abilities, I don’t have that kind of luxury.”

Xiao Yan paused before changing the tone of his voice, “Wait, Xun Er. How are you so familiar with them? The things that you’ve just said, my father might not even know some of them. How do you know all these?”

Xun Er stiffened but did not say anything.

Looking at Xue Er's avoidance on the subject, Xiao Yan could only helplessly smile. Even though Xun Er was also part of the Xiao family, she and Xiao Yan didn't have any relation by blood. In addition, Xiao Yan had never seen Xun Er's parents and every time he asked his father about them, Xiao Zhan would shake his head and not speak. Soon, Xun Er's parents became a taboo subject, something that they seemed to fear speaking about.

For Xiao Yan, Xun Er's identity was always veiled in mystery. No matter how hard or how cleverly he tried, Xun Er would always stay silent.

"Ugh, whatever, if you don't want to say it then don't." Shaking his head, Xiao Yan's face suddenly darkened again. The guest elder, under the repeated signals from Nalan Yanran, finally stood up...

"Heh, using the Faction of Misty Clouds to pressure father? This Nalan Yanran certainly is using some shameless tactics..." Fury began to build within Xiao Yan's heart.

Chapter 5: Qi Gathering Powder

“Ahem.” The white robed elder cleared his throat and stood up. Putting his hands together, he smiled: “Clan leader Xiao Zhan. The reason we came here for today is because we would like your help for something.”

“Of course, Ge Ye, if you have any problems just let me know. If I can help you solve it, then I definitely wouldn’t dare say no.” To the visiting elder, Xiao Zhan did not refuse but since he did not know what the request was, he did not make any promises either.

“Hehe, Leader Xiao, do you know her?” Ge Ye smiled lightly and pointed to the girl next to him.

“Umm... I’m sorry, this girl is...” Xiao Zhan looked over the girl and awkwardly shook his head.

When Nalan Yanran became Yun Jun’s student, she was only 8. After studying in the Faction of Misty Clouds for 5 years, she had changed quite a lot. Before she was only a child but now she is a blooming teenager!

“Huh...Her name is Nalan Yanran.”

“Uncle Xiao, I haven’t come to pay my respect in a long time. It’s my fault that you don’t recognize me.” Nalan Yanran sweetly said.

“Hehe, Yanran, I heard that you’ve become a student under Yun Jun. At the time, I thought that it was just a baseless rumour, but now I realize that it’s actually true. What incredible talent you must have...” Xiao Zhan complimented.

“It was just good luck...” Smiling lightly, Nalan Yanran began to feel uncomfortable and lightly tugged Ge Ye’s robe with her hand under the table.

“Hehe, Leader Xiao, the request that I have relates to Yanran. In addition, this was assigned by our faction leader...” Ge Ye kept his smile but when he mentioned the faction leader, he subconsciously lessened his smile and his face grew serious.

Like Ge Ye, Xiao Zhan stopped smiling. The faction leader of the Faction

of Misty Clouds was one of the most important people in the entire Jia Ma Empire. Xiao Zhan, who was a small clan leader, wouldn't dare to provoke her. But with her power, what would she need Xiao Clan to help with? Ge Ye did say that it was related to Yanran, is it that?

A wandering thought crossed Xiao Zhan's mind causing the edge of his mouth to twitch slightly and his firm hand to start trembling, thankfully his hands were covered by his long sleeves. Taking care to push down the thought, Xiao Zhan shakily asked: "Mister Ge Ye, please do tell me what is the faction's request?"

"Errr..." Ge Ye hesitated but he thought about how much the faction leader adored Yanran and thus, he clenched his teeth: "Leader Xiao, you know how strict the rules are in the faction. In addition, faction leader views Yanran very highly, in fact, faction leader is expecting Yanran to be the next faction leader. However, due to a special rule, future faction leaders cannot have a relation with another male before they become the official faction leader..."

Taking a breath, Ge Ye continued: "When our faction leader asked Yanran about it, she realized that Yanran and the Xiao Clan had a marriage proposal, therefore, faction leader asks for Leader Xiao to... to cancel this marriage."

"KA!" The jade cup in Xiao Zhan's hands turned into a fine mist in an instant.

In the main hall, everyone was silent. The three clan elders were shocked by Ge Ye's words but soon afterwards, the elders glanced at Xiao Zhan with plain glee and ridicule.

"Hehe, how will you respond to this?" The three elders thought sinisterly.

A couple of the younger kids didn't know about the set marriage between Xiao Yan and Nalan Yanran, but after asking their parents about it, their faces brightened! Their glances towards Xiao Yan were full of ridicule and distaste...

Looking at Xiao Zhan's dark face, Nalan Yanran lowered her head and

squeezed her fingers together.

“Leader Xiao, I know that this request is a little over the top, but because faction leader requested it, please cancel the marriage...” Helplessly letting out a breath, Ge Ye lightly whispered to Xiao Zhan.

Xiao Zhan’s hands curled into fists. A faint green Dou Qi slowly crept over his body and finally, it formed a illusory lion’s head in front of Xiao Zhan’s face.

Xiao Clan’s secret Qi Method: Furious Lion’s Rage! Level: Middle Xuan!

Looking at Xiao Zhan’s reaction, Ge Ye’s face became serious. He moved to place Yanran behind him and within his eagle claw like hands a green Dou Qi gathered. The Dou Qi released small but sharp illusory swords.

Faction of Misty Cloud’s Qi Method: Green Wood Sword! Level: Low Xuan!

With the release of Dou Qi, the weaker youngsters within the main hall became pale and felt their chests tighten.

When Xiao Zhan’s breathing became more intense, the three elders yelled out! Their voices were like lightning that swept through the hall: “Xiao Zhan, STOP! Don’t forget, you’re the clan leader of Xiao Clan!”

Xiao Zhan stiffened and the Dou Qi on his body disappeared slowly...

Xiao Zhan fell back into his chair and emotionlessly watched the lowered head of Yanran. Finally, he said in a raspy tone: “Nalan, you have some guts. With such a daughter, I’m really envious of Nalan Su.”

Nalan Yanran twitched: “Uncle Xiao...”

“No! Call me Clan Leader Xiao from now on. I don’t deserve to be called Uncle; you’re the future faction leader of the Faction of Misty Clouds. In the future, you’ll probably one of the most important people in Dou Qi mainland. My Xiao Yan only has modest talent, he doesn’t deserve you...”

“Thank you Clan Leader Xiao.” Hearing Xiao Zhan’s words, Ge Ye’s face brightened. Apologizing, he says: “Clan Leader Xiao, faction leader understands that today’s request is quite disrespectful. Therefore, she

asked me to bring something, please accept it as an apology from our faction leader.”

Ge Ye touched a ring on his hand and suddenly a completely pan-green jade box appeared in his hand...

Carefully opening the box, a fragrance swept through the entire main hall. Anyone who smelled it felt relaxed.

The three elders' curiosity got the better of them and they poked their head to see the contents of the box: “Qi Gathering Powder?”

Chapter 6: Alchemists

Within the jade box, a green pill, about the size of a Dragon's eye, laid quietly. The refreshing scent that had spread throughout the entire hall was emanating from the pill!

In Dou Qi Mainland, to become a Dou Zhe, one needs to be able to compress the Qi within one's own body to a Qi cyclone. But the process of compressing Qi to become a Qi cyclone has an extremely high failure rate. After failing, one's 9 Duan Qi would fall back to 8 Duan. Some unlucky people need to compress their Qi 10 or more times before they are successful in doing so. But by wasting so much time on the compression of Qi, one would lose the best time to practice Qi and thus destroy their future.

Qi Gathering Power, its use was to allow someone with 9 Duan Qi to have a 100% percent success rate when trying to compress one's Qi!

This effect makes many people red-eyed. After all, anyone that's not a Dou Zhe is treated extremely badly.

But Qi Gathering Power isn't something made by nature, rather it was made by someone: Alchemist!

In Dou Qi Mainland, the sole profession that's more desirable than a Dou Zhe are Alchemists.

Like the name suggests, alchemists are able to create special pills that raise one's strengths. Every free-agent alchemist is sought after by many forces.

The reason as to why alchemists have such a high position is because of how rare alchemists are and how strict the requirements to become an alchemist are.

First of all, one must be of the fire attribute. And then, within the fire attribute, one must have a tiny sliver of the wood attribute to act as a catalysis in pill-refining.

In the Dou Qi Mainland, a person's attribute is determined by their soul.

A soul since birth will only have one, sole attribute and reject any other attribute. So it's impossible for a person to have two attributes.

Of course, nothing is impossible. Within a million people, there will always be someone who has a mutated soul. Within these people that have mutated souls, some have the potential to become Alchemists!

However, a person that has the fire and wood attributes is not enough to become an Alchemist. That's because one must also have a strong Soul Perception or Soul Moulding!

In the refinement of pills, the three most important requirements are: The material, the flame and one's soul perception.

The Material. They would have to be natural treasures. After all, even the best alchemists can't create a god-tier pill from trash material. Therefore, good base materials are very important for good pills.

The flame. Or the fire that's required when refining pills. The fire used in refining pills can't be normal flames but rather, they must be Dou Qi flames created through Dou Qi with a fire attribute. Of course, there are some extremely strong mutated flames in nature. Some strong alchemists would take these flames and use them to refine pills instead of their own Dou Qi flame. Not only do these mutated flames boost the success rate of the refinement, they also increase the effectiveness of the pills!

Because refining pills is a gruesome task, extended periods of refinement requires a lot of Dou Qi, and because of that, every brilliant alchemist is also a strong fire-type Dou Zhe.

The final requirement is Soul Perception.

When refining a pill, the intensity of the flame needs to be controlled with ridiculous precision. If the flame is slightly too hot, the pill within the furnace would be burned to ashes, wasting the time and effort of the alchemist. Therefore, controlling the intensity of the flame is a prerequisite to becoming an alchemist. But in order to have a control over the flames, one must have an incredible Soul Perception; without Soul Perception, even if one meets or even exceeds the first two requirements, it would be pointless to try to refine pills.

Under these strict conditions, the ones who have the qualifications to become an alchemist are few and rare. Because there aren't that many alchemists, the magical pills that they refine are also few and sparse. Since rare things are valuable and pills can definitely be defined as rare, alchemists all have a honorable, to an exaggerated extent, position.

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Within the main hall, with the gasps of the three elders, the younger generation all stare at the Jade box in Ge Ye's hands.

Next to her father, Xiao Mei licks her red lips with her soft tongue and stares at the box, without blinking...

"Hehe, this was refined by our honorable elder Gu He. I think that everyone here has heard of his name right?" Looking at the embarrassing appearance of the three elders, Ge Ye started becoming arrogant.

"This pill was refined by the Pill King Gu He?" Hearing Ge Ye's words, the three elders once again embarrassed themselves.

Pill King Gu He, an extremely influential alchemist within the Jia Ma Empire. His alchemy is mysterious and unpredictable, causing countless different forces to try to fawn upon him.

Not only does Gu He have extraordinary talent in alchemy, his own strength is at the level of a Dou Wang and he's one of the top ten Dou Zhes in Jia Ma Empire.

Refined by his hands, the Qi Gathering Powder's value is probably exponentially higher than other normal Qi Gathering Power.

The three elders smile at the Qi Gathering Powder within the Jade box. If the Xiao Clan gets this Qi Gathering Powder, then the Xiao Clan can probably develop another young Dou Zhe.

Right when the three elders were thinking about how to get the pill for their own grandsons, a young voice filled with fury resonates within the main hall.

"Mr. Ge Ye, it would be better if you kept the pill. Your request, we might

not accept it!"

The main hall fell silent and everyone's gaze turns upon the delicate face of Xiao Yan in the corner.

"Xiao Yan, you don't have the right to say anything right now. Be quiet!" One of the elder's face became dark as he yells at Xiao Yan.

"Xiao Yao, be quiet. I know that you're not happy about this but we'll decide what will happen!" Another quite old elder said to Xiao Yan.

"Three elders, if your sons or grandsons had their marriage released today, would you still be saying that?" Xiao Yao slowly stands up. The edge of his mouth was curved upwards in ridicule. Since it was apparent that the three elders treated him with disdain, why should he be so respectful to them?

"You..." Hearing Xiao Yan's words, the three elders couldn't find a way to argue against his words. The grumpy third elder even started materializing his Dou Qi in anger.

"Three elders, Xiao Yao ge-ge isn't wrong. He's the victim of this so you guys shouldn't decide for him." A clear girl's voice rang across the main hall.

Hearing the girl's voice, the three elders' arrogance fell and after exchanging worried glances, they all nodded and sat back down.

Looking at the three elders backing off, Xiao Yao turns his head back and deeply gazes at the smiling Xiao Xun Er. Who are you? To be able to make the three elder fear you...

Pressing down his confusion, Xiao Yao quickly walks up and respectfully bows to his father, Xiao Zhan. Afterwards, he turns around to face Nalan Yanran. Slowly letting a breath of air, he asks: "Lady Nalan, I would like to ask a question. Your visit here today, to release the marriage, did Grandfather Nalan give his consent?"

Before, when Xiao Yan came out from his corner, Nalan Yanran already felt uncomfortable with him. Now hearing his question, her brow scrunches up. This guy, at first I thought he was pretty nice, but he's

actually extremely shameless. Does he not know the difference between the two of us?

Criticizing Xiao Yan in her mind, Nalan Yanran never considered how releasing the marriage would put Xiao Yan and his father into an awkward and infuriating situation.

Standing up and staring at the should be husband of hers, Nalan Yanran says: "Grandfather didn't give his consent. But! This is my own problem and not related to him."

"Since Grandfather hasn't said anything then I hope that you will forgive my father for not accepting your request. Our marriage was set by our two grandfathers and since none of them have said to release the marriage then this marriage will go on. Or else, the people that are trying to release the marriage would be disrespecting their ancestors! I think, that within our clan, there aren't any people that would do such a dishonorable thing." Xiao Yan tilts his head and stares straight at the three elders.

Using the dishonorable title, Xiao Yan forced the elders to be silent. In the strict clan, doing something as blasphemous as disrespecting one's ancestors would be enough for them to lose their spot as an elder of the clan.

"You..." After being rebuffed by Xiao Yan, Nalan Yanran couldn't find any argument to retort Xiao Yan's claim. Her face became ashen and heavily stomping her feet, her princessy nature became apparent. Looking at the young man with disgust, she annoyingly says: "Under what conditions will you release the marriage? Were the reparations too little? Alright, I can ask my teacher to give you another 3 Qi Gathering Powder. In addition, if you want to, I can let you join Faction of Misty Clouds and learn profound Dou Qi training methods, is that enough?"

Hearing the attractive conditions from Nalan Yanran, the three elders' breathing started to become heavy. Within the main hall, the younger generation swallowed the saliva. Joining Faction of Misty Clouds? God, that's the dream of countless people...

After saying all these conditions, Nalan Yanran raised her snow-white

chin, like a princess addressing her servants. She waited for Xiao Yan's response and knew that these conditions were enough to make any young man crazy...

Chapter 7: Divorce!

Unlike what Nalan Yanran expected, after saying the alluring condition, the young man in front of her started trembling. He slowly raised his head and his delicate and young face was contorted into a fearsome, savage face.

Even though Xiao Yan had endured countless taunts over the past three years, even he had a limit. Nalan Yanran's actions had roughly stepped on the final shred of dignity hidden deep within Xiao Yan's heart.

"Ahh..." Seeing the vicious face of the young man, Yanran sprang backwards. The young man by her sides took the chance to pull out his sword and coldly stared at Xiao Yan.

"I...I want to kill you!" Even though his teeth were clattering, Xiao Yan's words had an unmistakable killing intent to them! His hands were curled into fists and within the his black pupils, furious flames burned.

"Yan Er, you're being rude!" At the top of the hall, Xiao Zhan was shocked by the reaction of Xiao Yan and hurriedly quieted Xiao Yan. The current Xiao clan wouldn't dare be on the wrong side of Faction of Misty Clouds.

Even though his fists tightened even further, Xiao Yan lowered his head. Moments later, he lightly lifts up his head. The difference was that the vicious face that he had displayed earlier had been completely replaced by a calm and impassive face...

In the past 3 years, Xiao Yan had endured countless discrimination and taunts. As a result, Xiao Yan was now more mature than before. Perhaps his greatest gain from the past three years was that he had learned to keep his emotions under control.

Looking at the completely different young man, Ge Ye and Nalan Yanran suddenly felt a chill...

This kid, if he stays useless then it isn't a big deal. But if he gains strength, then he will definitely become a dangerous force to be reckoned

with... Ge Ye solemnly thought.

"Xiao Yan! Even though I don't know why my actions have infuriated you thus far, but, you... you should still release the marriage!" Slowly letting out a breath, Nalan Yanran pushed her fear and stiffened her face.

"Remember, my visit to Xiao clan was permitted by my teacher, the faction leader of Faction of Misty Clouds!" Pursing her lips, Nalan Yanran said, with a slight hint of helplessness: "You can understand that my visit today is partly coercion. But you should understand that the reality is harsh and nothing is fair. Even though it shouldn't mean much, you should understand the difference between us, we...we don't have any hope of being together..."

Hearing the absolute statements of the girl, Xiao Yan's mouth curved into a sneer: "Lady Nalan... You should understand, in Dou Qi mainland, a woman going back on her marriage would be embarrass the opposite party in front of everyone. Hehe, I don't really care about being embarrassed, but my father! He's the clan leader, if we accept your request today then how do you expect him to rule over Xiao clan? How will Xiao clan keep a foothold in Wu Tan City?"

Looking at the the furious young man, Nalan Yanran's brows furrowed. She peeked at Xiao Zhan at the end of the hall; he appeared as if he had just aged by a lot. Seeing that, she felt slightly sorry for her actions and bit her lips. After musing for a moment, her eyes lit up. She whispers: "Today's request, it's a little reckless on my part. So, today, I will temporarily take back my request to release my marriage. But, you must promise me something!"

"What promise?"

"I can delay today's request for three years. Three years from now, you will come to Faction of Misty Clouds and challenge me. If I win then I will release the marriage in front of everyone and at that time, you would have performed your clan's rites of adulthood so even if you lose, you won't be affecting your father Xiao Zhan or Xiao clan. Do you accept?"

Hehe, when I lose then, it won't affect the name of my father. But maybe

for my entire life, I'll bear the shame of losing. This woman... is too cruel! Xiao Yan felt helpless, he was angry but he couldn't find a source to vent it.

"Lady Nalan, it's not like you don't know the condition of Yan Er. How do you expect him to challenge you? Insulting him like this, is it fun for you?" Xiao Zhan smacked the table and angrily stood up.

"Xiao Zhan shu-shu, when releasing a marriage, there must someone who bears the responsibilities of it. If not for you, I would be releasing the marriage today! Afterwards, I will announce it to the public!" After being blocked several time, Nalan Yanran was also getting angry and coldly shouted at Xiao Yan: "Since you don't want to hurt the name of Xiao Zhan shu-shu, then accept the challenge! Three years or now, will you choose the former or the later?"

"Nalan Yanran, you don't need to act all high and mighty. The reason behind you releasing this marriage is because you don't think that I, Xiao Yan, a near cripple, match you, a genius. Forgive me for putting things plainly. Besides your beauty, I don't care about anything else of yours! The Faction of Misty Clouds is very strong, I'll admit that. But I am young! I have lots of time. When I was twelve, I was a Dou Zhe, but you, Nalan Yanran, when you were twelve, how many Duan Qi did you have? You're right, I might be crippled right now, but since I created miracles three years ago, why do you think that I can't repeat such miracles in the future? Why do you think that I can't become the genius that I once was?" Facing the aggressive stance, Xiao Yan finally erupted like a volcano. His face became completely serious and his words shocked everyone in the main hall. Who would have thought that the quiet young man possessed such a sharp tongue!

Nalan's mouth twitched. Even though she was extremely pissed at Xiao Yan, she couldn't find words to argue against his statements. Xiao Yan's words were truth; even though he was crippled now, he was a Dou Zhe back when he was twelve years old. But Nalan Yanran was only Eight Duan Qi at that time...

"Lady Nalan, because of Grandfather Nalan, I'll give you some advice.

Thirty years east, thirty years west, don't you dare bully me because I'm poor now." Xiao Yan's tough words made Nalan stiffen.

"Yes! What a great saying, don't you dare bully me because I'm poor now! My son can't possibly be ordinary!" At the end of the hall, Xiao Zhan's eyes were lit with vigor and his heavy palms slammed against the table, causing tea to splatter everywhere.

Clenching her teeth and staring at the sneering young man in front of her, Nalan became so angry that her head began to feel dizzy. Nalan Yanran had been spoiled since birth and had never been humiliated by someone the same age as her. Her childish voice climbed another pitch: "What is your basis for humiliating me? Even if your talent before was unsurpassed by anyone, the you now... you're a cripple now! Okay, I, Nalan Yanran, will wait for the day that you surpass me. Today's release, I won't mention it any more, but three years from now, I will wait for you at Faction of Misty Clouds. If you have the guts, then show me how you've changed your situation! If you defeat me then... then I, Nalan Yanran, will be your slave for the rest of my life!"

"Of course, if you're still crippled three years later then you better prepare the contract to release our marriage!"

Looking at the ashen face of the girl, Xiao Yan ridicules: "It won't take three years! I wouldn't want you even if you were begging me to become my wife!" After saying that, Xiao Yan ignored the frozen face of Yanran and turned around. Quickly walking forward to a table, he took out a paper and started to write!

The ink slowly dropped onto the paper, and finally, his pen stopped moving.

Suddenly, Xiao Yan's right hand reached for a short sword on the desk and pointed the sharp blade at his left hand. As soon as he readied the sword, he firmly drew blood from his left hand.

His bloodied hand pressed down on the white paper, leaving a glaring red mark.

Lightly picking up the contract, Xiao Yan laughed, a laugh of victory.

When he walked past Yanran, he smashed the contract on the table.

“Don’t you dare think that I, Xiao Yan, think highly of some genius wife. This contract, isn’t a contract to release the marriage but rather, I am divorcing you from the Xiao Clan! From now on, you, Nalan Yanran, have no relations with the Xiao Clan!”

“You... You dare divorce me?” Looking at the bloody contract on the table, Nalan Yanran’s eyes opened wide in disbelief. With her beauty, talent and background, to have been divorced by a small clan’s cripple? This sudden turn of events made her think that she was in a dream!

Coldly looking at Nalan Yanran’s dumbfounded expression, Xiao Yan turned around and kneels in front of Xiao Zhan. He gave a heavy Kowtow, biting his lips, and didn’t say anything...

Even though Xiao Yan actually divorced Nalan Yanran, when the events spread out, others might not think that it’s the truth. They, who don’t know what happened, would think that Nalan Yanran used her tyrannical background for force Xiao clan to release the marriage. After all, with Yanran’s beauty, talent and background, a cripple from Xiao clan would never be able to match her. No one would think that Xiao Yan had the boldness to divorce a future faction leader of the Faction of Misty Clouds. Because of that, being Xiao Yan’s father, Xiao Zhan would probably have to endure endless ridicule.

Looking at the kneeling Xiao Yan and understanding the guilty feelings that his son was having, Xiao Zhan helplessly smiled: “I believe that my son won’t stay crippled forever. Gossip won’t stand a chance when the hard facts come out in the future!”

“Father, three years from now, I will go to Faction of Misty Clouds and redeem today’s shame!” With slightly wet eyes, Xiao Yan did another heavy kowtow and stood up. Without hesitating, Xiao Yan walked towards the door of the main hall.

When he passed Nalan Yanran, Xiao Yan pauses of a moment and spits out cold words from his young mouth.

“Three years from now, I will find you!”

The shadow of the young man, under the shining sun, extended extremely far. Looking at it, it seemed very lonely.

Nalan Yanran's small mouth opened but no sound came out. She stared at the disappearing back of Xiao Ya and the contract in her hand felt as heavy as a mountain...

"Ahem, since your goal has been accomplished, please leave now." Looking at the receding young man, even though Xiao Zhan's face was impassive, the hands inside of his sleeve curled into fists so tight that the fingers became a pale white.

"Xiao shu-shu, I apologize for today's event. If you have time in the future, make sure to come visit the Nalan Clan!" Lightly bowing to the impassive Xiao Zhan, Nalan also didn't want to stay. She quickly stood up and went towards the door of the main hall. Behind her, Ge Ye and the handsome young man quickly followed her.

"Take the Qi Gathering Powder!" Waving his hand, Xiao Zhan threw the jade box on the table at them.

Ge Ye quickly caught the falling box and bitterly smiled while placing the box within his ring.

"Lady Nalan, hopefully you won't regret your actions today. And also, don't assume that with Faction of Misty Clouds behind you, you can do anything you want. There are a lot of people stronger than Yun Yun..." When Nalan Yanran was about to exit the door, a clear girl's cold voice sounded within the hall.

The steps of the three paused and they glanced towards the corner where the voice came from, finding a purple dressed girl slowly flipping a book.

The sunlight shined through the window next to her and perfectly wrapped around the girl. From afar, she looked like a heavenly purple lotus blooming, clean and graceful, as if she was from the heavens.

As if she felt the glances from the three, the girl picked her head up from the old book and within the autumn like eyes of hers, a thin line of

golden flame peeked out.

Looking at the thin flame within the girl's eyes, Ge Ye immediately stiffened and a fearful expression crossed his wizened face. His shriveled hands immediate grabbed the confused Nalan Yanran and young man and he fled from the main hall as if he was fearing for his life.

Looking at the actions of Ge Ye, except for a few people, the others all had expressions of confusion.

Chapter 8: The Mysterious Elder

Emotionlessly leaving the main hall, the frustrated Xiao Yan followed his daily routine and slowly climbed to the top of the mountain behind the clan building. Sitting at the top of the mountain, Xiao Yan calmly watched the steep mountaintops far away being shrouded in mist. There, in the mist, was the Jia Ma Empire's famous Magic Beast Mountain Range.

"Hehe, power ah... In this world, without power, you're not even worth some excrement. At least, no one tries to trample on excrement." With shoulders waving up and down, the young man's soft, self-taunting voice echoed across the top of the mountain, filling the air with sadness.

Yanking his hair, Xiao Yan bit down on his lip, allowing the bloody taste to spread in his mouth. Even though he didn't let his emotions get to him in the main hall, the Nalan Yanran's words stabbed at his heart like knives.

"I will never be insulted like this again!" Opening his left hand, which still had the bloody scar from the events of the day, Xiao Yan's voice was hoarse but firm.

"Hehe, kid, looks like you need some help."

Right when Xiao Yan pledged his oath, a wizened, strange laugh entered his ear.

Xiao Yan's face changed and he immediately turned around. With a hawk-like gaze, he scanned his surroundings but didn't even find a shadow...

"Hehe, stop searching, I'm on your finger."

Right when Xiao Yan thought that he was hallucinating, the strange laugh aimlessly sounded again.

Xiao Yan's eyes contracted and his gaze fell on his right hand's black ring.

"You're talking?" Enduring his heart's pounding, Xiao Yan tried to keep his voice calm.

“Kid, you’re quite calm, to not have been scared witless.” From the ring, a taunting voice sounded.

“Who are you? Why are you in my ring? What are trying to do?”

After calming himself, Xiao Yan asked the essential questions.

“Who am I? You don’t need to know, I won’t harm you. Hahaha, after all these years, I finally found someone with a soul strong enough. What luck! Hehe, I should thank you for your offerings over the past three years, otherwise I would probably still be sleeping.”

“Offerings?” Xiao Yan blinked his eyes in confusion. After a moment, his face darkened and chilling words jumped out of his teeth with difficulty: “My Dou Qi disappearing... you did that?”

“Hehe, I had to do that, kid don’t be mad at me.”

“You FUCKER!”

The normally calm and composed Xiao Yan became enraged like a lunatic. His small face was filled with savagery, and without caring that the ring was the only memento of his mother, he ripped the ring off of his finger and flung it over the cliff with all of his might.

As the ring left his hand, Xiao Yan’s mind finally cleared. Hurriedly he tried to catch the flying ring but the ring had already passed cliff, freefalling down the mountain...

Staring at the ring disappearing into the mist, Xiao Yan was stunned for a long time. Finally, his face lost its savagery and calmed. He smacked his forehead, upset: “Idiot that was too reckless, too reckless!”

To realize that the culprit of his humiliation for the past three years was the ring he always wore, it was unsurprising that Xiao Yan reacted so violently.

After sitting at the edge of the cliff for a long time, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head. Standing up, he prepared to go back but his eyes widened and his finger shakily pointed at the thing in front of him.

In front of Xiao Yan was the pitch-black ring, floating in the sky. But the

thing that surprised Xiao Yan the most was the transparent wizened figure above the ring...

"Hehe, kid, you don't need to be so mad do you? I only took three years of your Dou Qi." The transparent elder smiled at the stunned Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan's mouth twitched and he pushing down his anger. He said: "Geezer, since you were hiding within the ring, then you should know how much pain you've caused me since you took my Dou Qi right?"

"But with these three years of humiliations, you've matured right? Do you think that three years ago you would have had this kind of tolerance and mindset?"

Xiao Yan furrowed his brows but his emotions started to calm down. After the rage, a hint of happiness took over Xiao Yan. Since he knew why his Dou Qi was disappearing, his talent had returned!

Thinking about the chance to take off the title of crippled that countless others had put on him, Xiao Yan felt as if he had been reborn. The detestable elder in front him didn't look as annoying as before.

Some things, after they disappear, would make one start appreciating their value! After losing and regaining it, one treasures it more!

Lightly twisting his wrist, Xiao Yan let out a long breath and said: "Even though I don't know who you are, I would like to know if you plan on staying in the ring to steal my Dou Qi. If that's the case then I would ask for you to find a new owner, I can't afford to keep on raising you."

"Hehe, other people don't have as strong of Soul Perception as you." The elder stroked his beard: "Since I already chose to appear, then before you give me permission I won't take your Dou Qi."

Xiao Yan rolled his eyes and sneered without saying anything. He had already decided, regardless of anything the elder says, he would not keep that ring by his side.

"Kid, do you want to become strong? Do you want to be respected by other?" Even though Xiao Yan had already decided to not have anything more to do with the elder, his heart started beating rapidly when he heard

those words.

"I already know why my Dou Qi was disappearing and with my talent, why do I need you to become strong?" Letting out a small breath, Xiao Yan smoothly said. He knew that there were no free lunches in this world. To owe a mysterious person a favor, isn't a smart move.

"Kid, even though your talent is pretty good, you should know that you're already 15 but your Dou Qi is only at 3 Duan. I think that I heard that your adult ceremony is next year right? Do you think that within a year, using your talent and hard work you can get to 7 Duan Qi? In addition, the girl who you promised to fight three years from now doesn't have shabby talent either. You want to catch up and surpass her? It's not going to be easy." The elder's face that was full of wrinkles blossomed like a Chrysanthemum.

"If you didn't take my Dou Qi, then do you think that any of this would have happened? You old fucker!" After his biggest weakness was exposed, Xiao Yan's face darkened once again and he started to curse.

After cursing, Xiao Yan felt a hint of despair. In his current situation, no matter how much he cursed, there would be no effect. The practice of Dou Qi required a strong foundation. Back when he was four, it took him 6 years to get to 9 Duan Dou Qi. Even with his talent, getting to 7 Duan Qi in just one year was hopeless.

Sighing depressedly, Xiao Yan glanced at the pretentious elder. The edge of his mouth curled and he asked: "Do you have a solution?"

"Maybe." The elder vaguely replied.

"If you help me to get to 7 Duan Qi in just one year then I'll forgive you for taking my Dou Qi for three years. How's that?" Xiao Yan probingly asked.

"Hehe, wishful thinking kid."

"If you can't help me then why should I keep you, someone useless, by my side? You should find another unfortunate person..." Xiao Yan knew that the transparent elder couldn't randomly take Dou Qi from other

people so he knew that he had some leverage in the negotiations.

"You're not even remotely close to a 15 year old young man. Looks like these three years really helped you grow a lot. Did my plan backfire?" Looking at the clever Xiao Yan, the elder paused and then dumbfoundedly shook his head.

Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders and lightly said: "If you want me to keep you by my side then you should at least have some sincerity right?"

"What a sharp mouthed kid. Alright, alright, after all, I do need your help." Without another choice, the elder nodded and slowly came to the ground. After examining Xiao Yan for a while, a treacherous smile spread across his face. But as soon as it appeared, it left and the elder pondered for a moment before unwilling asking: "Do you want to become an alchemist?"

Chapter 9: Yao Lao

“Alchemist?”

Hearing the elder’s words, Xiao Yan paused before continuing: “In the Dou Qi mainland, everyone wants to become an Alchemist, but is it that easy to become an alchemist? There are so many harsh requirements...” Suddenly, Xiao Yan’s voice fell and he raised his head: “I MET THE REQUIREMENTS?”

Enjoying the shocked yet excited expression that Xiao Yan showed, the elder stroked his beard slowly. After looking over Xiao Yan for a few more seconds, he finally said with some helplessness: “Even though you barely make the cut, I owe you a favor. Hah, whatever, I’ll let this count as the favor returned...”

Looking at the reluctant elder, Xiao Yan thought that the geezer was lying about him barely making the cut, but he was too lazy to probe further. Despite his excitement, he still had his suspicions. “Even if I make the cut, alchemists are taught by other alchemists. Are you an alchemist?”

Looking at the suspicious little face of Xiao Yan, the elder straightened and with pride he said, “Yup, I’m an alchemist!”

Blinking his eyes, Xiao Yan’s gaze at the elder became bright. Alchemists, those are really rare...

“Mister, if you don’t mind me asking, what rank alchemist were you before?” Xiao Yan licked his lips and his young voice was infused with a hint of respect.

In Dou Qi mainland, even though alchemists were very rare, there were still differences between alchemists. From low to high, the stages for alchemists range from the lowest, 1, to the highest, 9. The Pill King Gu He that made the Gathering Qi Powder that Nalan Yanran offered was a sixth stage alchemist and within the Jia Ma Empire, he could be considered to be the top alchemist!

“What stage? Hehe, I don’t remember . . . Hey, kid, do you want to learn

it or not?" the elder impatiently asked while shaking his head.

"Of course, I want to!"

Xiao Yan didn't hesitate anymore and hurriedly nodded with his small head. Alchemists, even with forces as powerful as Faction of Misty Clouds, were treated with respect and deference.

"Hehe, you want to? Since you want to, then you should pay your respects to your teachers." The elder sat on a green rock and coiled his legs beneath himself.

"I need to pay my respects to my teacher?"

"Ridiculous! To not pay your respects and still expect me to teach you all that I know? You're dreaming!" The elder rolled his eyes, looks like the pedantic elder really cared about these student-teacher relationships.

Helpless with a dour face, Xiao Yan could only respectfully pay his respects to the elder to become an honorable alchemist.

After watching Xiao Yan finish paying his respects, the elder finally nodded his head, satisfied. In his voice, a hint of intimacy appeared: "My name is Yao Lao. As for my origin, you don't need to know for now so that you don't get distracted. All you need to know is that the Pill King is ... only trash in my eyes."

The edges of his mouth twitching, Xiao Yan watched the elder's carefree expression and thought: What is this geezer? The famous Pill King Gu He in Jia Ma Empire is only trash? If this spreads then the whole of Jia Ma would probably assume that he's mentally ill.

Lightly taking in a breath and pushing down his shock, Xiao Yan's eyes darted around and with some droll he asked: "Umm teacher, how will you help me to get to 7 Duan Qi within one year?"

"Even though for the past three years your Dou Qi has always been declining, your foundation in Dou Qi is much firmer than other people. In Dou Qi training, the foundation is the most important! Later, you'll be able to discover how many benefits these three years have brought you!" Yao Lao's smile slowly disappeared and he took on a more serious expression.

Xiao Yan was stunned, he was never told that having one's strength taken away would bring benefits.

"Then when are you going to teach me alchemy?" Xiao Yan steered his thoughts onto the most important thing.

"To become an alchemist, you need to have Dou Qi of the Fire-Attribute. So, before you become an alchemist you have to at least become a Dou Zhe and learn a fire attribute Dou Qi method!"

Xiao Yan held out his hand and laughingly asked: "Fire attribute Dou Qi method? Hehe, teacher, since I'm your student, you should give me a Tian Level fire attribute Dou Qi method, right?"

Hearing that, Yan Lao indignantly scolded Xiao Yan: "Really? Do you think that Tian Stage Dou Qi Methods are like potatoes in the ground? How could you say something like that?!"

"Geezer, since I've already become your student, you can't possibly let me go into my clan to find Dou Qi methods, right? Our clan's top fire attribute Dou Qi method is only a high huang level. That's way too shabby for an alchemist!" Xiao Yan's face showed how depressed he was.

"Brat, I'm your teacher, not a geezer!"

Hearing Xiao Yan's disrespectful words, Yao Lao rolled his eyes when he realized that Xiao Yan didn't care about being respectful to his elders.

"Hmph! Since you're my student, I wouldn't let you practice some shabby methods. Tian Stage Methods? I don't have them! But I have a method that's a lot stronger than a normal Tian Stage Method. Do you want to learn it?" Yao Lao's turbid old eyes suddenly became conspiratorial.

"Stronger than a Tian Stage Dou Qi Method?"

His heart beats rapidly. Xiao Yan swallowed some saliva and in his pitch black eyes, a hint of anticipation could be found. "Then what level Dou Qi Method is it?"

"Low Huang Level." Yao Lao's light laughter made Xiao Yan's face

stiffen.

“Geezer, you were playing me?”

A furious voice sounded on the peak of the mountain.

Looking at the twisted face of the young man, Yao Lao started laughing. To be able to make the calm Xiao Yan that mad, he had a feeling of accomplishment.

“What’s strange about that Dou Qi Method?” Watching Yao Lao’s bantering face, Xiao Yan suddenly calmed down.

“It can evolve!”

Xiao Yan’s eyes widened and without blinking, Xiao Yan stared at Yao Lao’s face, trying to find a hint that Yao Lao was lying, but after a few seconds, he shook his head: “No way! I’ve never heard of any Dou Qi method that can evolve!”

“Huu, what do you know? Dou Qi mainland is huge and strange people and things happen all the time. In your limited mind, you haven’t even gone outside of Jia Ma Empire. There are tons of impossible things that are actually possible.”

Xiao Yan paused before saying: “Then have you ever heard about Dou Qi Methods that can evolve?”

Yao Lao’s smile stiffened: “Because there aren’t any other like it, this Dou Qi Method is unique!”

“It can evolve?” Looking at Yao Lao’s serious face, Xiao Yan couldn’t help but ask again.

“It can evolve!” Yao Lao seriously nodded.

“Have you tried it?”

“Oh... No.”

“Have other people tried it?”

“Oh... No.”

On Xiao Yan’s forehead, a vein could be seen. With his hands curled

tightly, Xiao Yan tried to resist his impulse to go over and punch the elder. “If no one else has ever tried it, then how do you know that it can evolve?”

“It’s explained like that on the Dou Qi Method.”

“There really are such Dou Qi Methods?” His brows furrowed, Xiao Yan hesitated before saying: “Can you let me see it?”

“Hehe...” Looking at the curious Xiao Yan, Yao Lao’s mouth opened, but what came out wasn’t what Xiao Yan was expecting. “Never mind. There’s no use if you see it now so why don’t you become a Dou Zhe first before I pass it on to you.”

Xiao Yan’s outstretched hand paused and after the edge of his mouth twitched for a while, he spat out three words: “You’re ruthless!”

Happily laughing, Yao Lao ignored the anger-filled pupils of Xiao Yan and said: “Our current mission is to get your Dou Qi up to 7 Duan within 1 year.”

Xiao Yan pushed down his curiosity and anger for the Dou Qi Method and asked with clenched teeth, “How are you going to do that?”

Yao Lao with a serious face said: “When one begins to train their Dou Qi, their main focus is to build muscle and strengthen internal Qi paths so that they have a foundation for when they materialize their Dou Qi within their body. Because people at your age have weak internal Qi paths and can be molded, you need to take the training process step by step and you can’t use outside force to boost your training speed or else in the future when your Dou Qi becomes stronger, your internal Qi paths won’t be able to withstand the force of Dou Qi pushing through the paths and your Qi paths would burst which would be when you would die.”

Xiao Yan knew this as well as Yao Lao because in the three years that he was crippled, his father was very worried and quite a few times, he tried to forcibly push Dou Qi into Xiao Yan’s body, but every time, at the last second, he would stop so Xiao Yan knew the stakes involved.

Yao Lao glanced at the calm Xiao Yan and satisfactorily nodded his head. “But that only applies to others. You’re different. Your internal foundation

was already solid and reliable three years ago and since then because of your firm personality, you never stopped training your Qi. Therefore, your foundation right now, I can say that it is great!"

"So you want to use outside forces to train my Qi? Like pills?"

"Pretty much. But with the toughness of your Qi paths right now, you won't be able to take the force of any of the pills going through your Qi paths. Even the rudimentary Gathering Qi Powder, you wouldn't be able to use!"

"The rudimentary Gathering Qi Powder..." Xiao Yan wanted to roll his eyes again. In Jia Ma Empire, a Gathering Qi Powder would fetch sky-high prices. But from his teacher, these Gathering Qi Powder became the most rudimentary things. The difference between the two left Xiao Yan stunned.

"Then your plan?" Taking a deep breath, Xiao Yan recovered and furrowed his brows again.

"Hehe, since pills are too fierce and can hurt your Qi paths, we need to use a milder method!" Yao Lao smiles and says: "Tomorrow, prepare for me three complete stalks of Purple Leaved Bluegrass, where the older they are, the better. Also, I need two stalks of Bone Washing Flower, the age of it doesn't matter. Oh right, I'll also need a level 1 wood attributed monster core. These are all low grade material so you should be able to get them... Someone's coming, I'll go back into the ring! Also, don't let anyone else know of my existence, including your closest family." After saying that, Yao Lao ignored the stunned Xiao Yan and jumped into the black ring. The ring shakes a bit and flies onto Xiao Yan's finger.

"Three stalks of Purple Leaved Bluegrass? Two stalks of Bone Washing Flower? A wood attribute monster core? Geezer, are you sure that's right? Do you think that I'm some royal prince? These things, added altogether costs over a thousand gold coin! After a few years of saving money to the point where I would skip meals and never spend on luxury items, I only have 400 gold coins. That's only enough for one level 1 wood attribute monster core!" Xiao Yan pointed at the motionless ring and cursed.

"That's your own problem. Hehe, other people would lust after my

nourishing fluids, but all I'm asking is for you to get the money for the material and you're already crying about that..." Yao Lao's taunting laughter sounded within Xiao Yan's heart.

"Damn it! The things that alchemists make can only be afforded by rich people." Xiao Yan helplessly laughed. His allowance each month was only 20 gold coins. This was by no means a small amount; it would be enough for a small normal family to feed themselves for an entire year! But the money that he had was barely enough to buy one of the items that Yao Lao required. This is the difference between alchemists and other people!

"Hah, looks like I have to borrow it from someone..." Sighing a depressed breath, Xiao Yan slowly regained his composure and his small face recovered to his normal calm face. Turning his head towards the path up the mountain, he could make out a purple figure climbing the mountain like a spirit.

Chapter 10: Borrowing Money

Tiptoeing on the rocks, Xiao Xun was like a beautiful purple butterfly with hypnotizing curves as she gracefully scaled the mountain. As she looks upward, her gaze focuses toward the youth standing next to the cliff.

Looking at the youth, Xiao Xun felt surprised. Even though it had only been a couple of hours, she noticed that compare to before, Xiao Yan has obtained something...

When their eyes meet, she finally realized what Xiao Yan has regained. His own confidence.

After three years, Xiao Yan's brilliance has returned at last.

Indulging in the transparent lingering on Xiao Yan's lips, two dimples appear Xiao Xun's pretty face: "Looks like Xiao Yan didn't need Xun Er to come and comfort him..."

"People grow after experiencing hardships, don't they?" Xiao Yan shrugs his shoulders.

"She will definitely regret it."

Xun Er curls her lips and says the words as if she were a judge having the final say on a court case.

Xiao Yan lightly smiles, pats his clothes and walks towards her.

When he gets near her, looking at Xun Er who's about the same height, he glances at the young but nevertheless pretty face. Suddenly Xiao Yan feels dizzy, remembering the girl who would be drooling all the time and following Xiao Yan everywhere. She's so pretty now...

Lightly smiling, Xiao Yan's gaze softens and he rudely pinches Xiao Xun's face underneath her shocked look: "Xun Er's grown up! But you turned out fine, not forgetting how Xiao Yan ge-ge would be covered with bruises trying to pick fruit from the trees."

Stunned at Xiao Yan's intimate actions, Xun Er stiffens for a whole second before her pitch-black, free of impurities, eyes smiles.

When she was still small, Xiao Yan loved to pinches her cheeks but ever since the event three years ago, he set up an invisible wall next to his heart and pushed everyone out. No matter how hard she tried, she would always be disappointed by the cold and impassive attitude of his...

He's back... But, it seems like he still considers me to be immature, he's such a log... Xun Er complains in her heart after an instant, Xun Er criticizes herself for being too greedy.

"Xun Er, for these past three years, please don't blame Xiao Yan ge-ge for being like that. I was living day by day but thankfully you were always by my side." Xiao Yan awkwardly nods his head and apologizes.

Xun Er sweetly smiles. The grievances she had endured for the past three years disappeared with the awkward apology.

"Hah, oh right. Xun Er... How much money do you have?" Letting go of Xun Er's face, Xiao Yan does a hollow laugh and asks.

In his clan, with the exception of his father, Xun Er was the only person that was in a good relationship with him. He had just shamed his father this morning so he could not bear to face his father to ask for money, which is why he asked Xun Er.

gun truyện: _Truyện YY.

"Money?" Blinking her crystal clear eyes, Xun Er is taken by surprise: "Xiao Yan ge-ge needs money?"

"Yes... I want to buy some items, though I'm a bit short." Xiao Yan felt embarrassed, this was the first time he borrowed money from a girl.

Looking at the usual frigid Xiao Yan now in distress, Xiao Xun Er looks at a completely different person. Covering her mouth and smiling cutely: "I have more than a thousand gold coins, is that enough? If not..."

While speaking, Xun Er's fingers behind her swiftly flick and a purple gold card suddenly appears between her fingers. On the card are five different waves of color.

5 Wave Purple Cold Card, in Dou Qi mainland, you have to be at least a

Dou Ling (If Dou Zhe is first, Dou Ling is 4th) to have the honor of using this type of gold card that represents their rank. Of course, some special powers also have the privilege of getting the card.

“That’s enough, that’s enough...” Happily nodding his head, Xiao Yan forcefully tried to stop himself from pinching Xun Er’s cute face.

“Don’t worry, I’ll pay you back later.” Xiao Yan promises while patting his chest.

“You don’t need to pay me back...” Xun Er pouts and quickly hides her purple gold card.

“Let’s go! It’s almost night now, tomorrow I’ll bring you to Wu Tang City for a walk.” Xiao Yan waved towards the girl and cheerfully descended the mountain.

Standing still, Xun Er delightfully looked at the youth who had regained his boldness from three years ago. Smiling softly, she murmured: “Nalan Yanran, should I despise you or be grateful to you?”

...

Early morning, the sun shone warmly through the window onto the body of the cross-legged youth in meditation.

“Whew...”

After meditating nearly all night, Xiao Yan inhaled deeply, a translucent white airflow that was visible to the naked eyes went through his mouth and nose and into his body, nursing his body and bones.

White light shined from his eyes as he suddenly opened his eyes. Xiao Yan stretched himself and passionately says “This is exactly this feeling, after three years, the feeling of Qi has returned!”

He slowly gets out of his bed, exercises himself a bit, before starting changing. From outside the room, Xun Er’s voice softly carries inside: “Xiao Yan ge-ge, still sleeping?”

She arrived here so early. Shaking his head, Xiao Yan turned around and then searched his drawers. Finally, with reluctance, he pulled out a small

box and carefully opened it. He narrowed his eyes from the glint of silver inside that box.

“And this is my entire savings...” Holding his money box, Xiao Yan smiled bitterly while shaking his head.

Xiao Yan gently smiled as he walked out of his room and saw the dazzling girl in front of his door.

Xun Er had changed into a pale green outfit that made her look even more naturally beautiful. She also had a pair of tight pants that stretched across her slender thighs and long legs, emphasizing her curves.

With long legs, Xun Er can be compared to young girls on earth, full of youthful vitality and seductivity, of course, she has her special elegance which Xiao Yan had never seen on any other girl but her...

“Here, it’s what you’ll need.” Looking at Xiao Yan exiting his room, Xun Er smiled and handed him a black card. This is a common card, the maximum it can contain is only 5000 gold coins.

Receiving the black card, Xiao Yan teases: “Little girl, why are you wearing such an attractive outfit? Could it be you’re having a date with somebody else?”

“Yeah, this is the first time in three years that Xiao Yan ge-ge has invited me out, Xun Er is very flattered so of course I have to dress up a little.” Xiao Yan’s intimate tease made Xun Er’s eyes bend into a shallow crescent shape while smiling coquettishly.

Reluctantly shaking his head, Xiao Yan smiles back happily. They chat while walking together towards the city, at about halfway, they were greeted by some clansmen looking at their affectionate conversation with a strange face.

Xun Er, be it beauty or talent, is the brightest pearl of the young generation in the clan. She usually is friendly to everybody but under her light smile is indifference, greetings with her are easy, but to start a long conversation would be very difficult.

Ignoring the looks of the other clansmen, Xian Yan quickly leads Xun Er

out of the clan before slowing down and leisurely peeking at the stall on the side of the street...

Wu Tang City lives up to its name of being one of the larger cities in Jia Ma Empire by the sheer number of people living in it. Even though the sun was beating down, on the streets were thousands if not tens of thousands of people, there would even be one or two bizarre races.

Maybe it was because of Xiao Yan beside her, but Xun Er became a lot more active after she exited the clan. She tugged the reluctant Xiao Yan into a variety of stall. Her tender laughter made the scorching street a little cooler.

When Xun Er finally got tired, Xiao Yan finally brought her to the nearby Pharmacy. After spending about 900 gold coins, he bought 3 stalks of 20 year Purple Leaved Bluegrass along with two stalks of 5 year Bone Washing Grass. These were both low end materials and would be able to be bought at a regular pharmacy. For higher end materials, Xiao Yan would have had to find them himself or buy them at an auction or if he was lucky, in a high end pharmacy.

Looking at the rapidly decreasing funds, Xiao Yan bitterly smiled. He realized how important money was in Dou Qi Mainland...

Anyways, he got all of the herbs, all that was left was the level one wood attributed monster core!

Chapter 11: The Market

Monster cores, in the Dou Qi Mainland, they are also known as Magic Crystals. The Monster Core is the energy nuclei within a magic monster. The monster core is filled with extremely violent world energy. When facing this kind of violent world energy, even a Dou Wang wouldn't risk absorbing a monster core.

Even though Monster cores cannot be absorbed directly, it is a core ingredient in alchemy. A monster core that goes through an Alchemist's refining can be infused with some herbs to become desirable and expensive pills that can increase one's strength.

Furthermore, monster cores can be placed on weapons. The weapon that has been fused with a monster core does not only have increased destructive power, it can also have special Dou Qi effects, and becomes a highly sought after commodity in the Dou Qi Mainland.

Besides weapons, Monster Cores can also be added to armors and defensive equipment. The defensive equipment that have Monster Cores have an extreme defense and give their users an extra safety net when they're in danger.

With that many uses, monster cores are naturally the most sought after items within the Dou Qi Mainland. Not only Dou Zhes but even respectable Alchemists search in person for high level monster cores in order to create higher quality level pills.

Under such demand, the supply for monster cores on the mainland is always unable to meet the demand from the buyers, thus whenever a high level core appears in any auction or other setting, it was bought immediately at a high price.

Because of the high value of monster cores, many mercenary groups specialize in killing magic monsters for a living but getting a monster core is not a simple task.

First, magic monsters are not only extremely strong but also very cunning. Because of their devious nature and special attacking methods,

magical beasts can be much stronger than humans of the same rank. Hence, without outstanding power of your own, trying to kill a magical beast on your own is impossible and may possibly lose your life without getting a magical core.

Even if you do kill a magic beast, not all magical beasts possess a magic core, the probability of a magical beast having a core is almost random so a mercenary group could have half of their force killed trying to kill a magic monster and yet not find a core. These kinds of incidents happen all the time in Dou Qi Mainland...

Thus the price of monster cores in Dou Qi Mainland are all very expensive.

.....

Bringing Xun Er through twisting alleys, Xiao Yan finally arrives at a market that's slightly south in the city. In Wu Tang city there are a few medium sized markets and all of them are controlled by one of the three clans. The market Xiao Yan is going in is under Xiao clan's control.

Even though it's under Xiao clan's control, Xiao Clan is actually only maintaining order and safety in the market. And for compensation, be it mercenaries or merchants who set up stalls, they have to pay taxes to the clan, this is the rule of Dou Qi Mainland for a long time and rarely anybody would try to go against it.

At the front entrance of the market, there were two guards from Xiao clan. They undoubtedly knew Xiao Yan and Xun Er, judging from when the guards saw them coming, the guards paused and immediately bowed.

Slightly nodding his head, Xiao Yan walked inside and looking at the neverending stream of people, he couldn't help himself from licking his lips. No wonder the clan keeps the market under strict control, with this many people visiting the market, the profits for the clan can't be low...

"Third young master, Miss Xun Er, would you like to buy something in the market?" Right when the two were dizzy looking at the sheer number of people, a respectful voice sounded behind them.

Hearing the sound, Xiao Yan turned his head. Behind him were seven to eight guys that were wearing the Xiao Clan's uniform. The speaker appeared to be a 30 years old mature man, wearing a badge with 6 gold stars, he is obviously a six star Dou Zhe.

Noticing the doubt in Xiao Yan's eyes, the man honestly smiled and said: "Third young master, I'm called Pei En. The clan leader appointed me to be the leader of the guards for maintaining safety in the market. Ah! Last year during young master's birthday, I, Pei En came..."

"Oh, it's Uncle Pei En!"

Xiao Yan blinked and even though he does not have any impression of Pei En, his introduction made Xiao Yan smile. Since the man was personally appointed by his father, he would naturally be his subordinate, there would be no issues with loyalty.

Even though the Xiao Clan wasn't some big and influential force, the clan was divided into different factions. If the man standing in front of him was under the control of the elders, he would have never been so kind and would have just said some customary greetings.

"I was bored in the clan so I decided to come out and look around. Uncle Pei En, you should go and do your work, if I have any questions, I'll be sure to ask you." Xiao Yan's young voice didn't have any hints of arrogance that a normal young master might have; instead, his voice was soft and respectful, anyone who heard it would feel a slight sense of pride and joy.

With another Uncle, the smile on Pei En's face widened and became more sincere. Nodding his head, he said: "Then enjoy looking around third young master. Our people are all over the market so if you need anything then just call out for us."

Respectfully nodding his head, Xiao Yan pulls Xun Er and plunged into the horde of people, disappearing from Pei En's sight...

"Pa Li, bring two men and follow Third Young Master. Also, warn the thieves in the market that if any of them have any ideas on Third Young Master or Xun Er then they don't need to be in this market anymore." Looking at the disappearing young boy and girl, Pei En turned around and

his honest face was replaced by a cunning and capable face.

“Yes, captain!” One of the men lowly answered and with a wave of his hand, him and two other men also go into the multitudes of people.

“Haha, Third Young Master is still so gentle, it allows people to be relaxed around him...” Looking at the three men mixing in with the crowd, Pei En smiles but in an instant, the smile turns into a frown and he sighed: “Third Young Master is such a nice person, it’s regretful, haa...”

Regretfully shaking his head, Pei En leads his remaining underlings and goes to patrol the streets.

...

Lazily following Xiao Yan, Xun Er “accidentally” glance behind her and smiled: “Xiao Yan ge-ge. Pei En’s quite nice.”

Xiao Yan answered with a yup and scans towards a nearby stall. His soul perception was far greater than normal people so he could detect the guards following him. Looking back forward, Xiao Yan slows down and walks side by side with Xun Er. Tilting his head, he jokes: “9 Duan Qi and already able to detect three hiding guards. Xun Er, pretty good...”

Xun Er copies Xiao Yan and cutely shrugged her shoulders, bringing out her trump card: Smile, Stay silent!

Looking at the silent Xun Er, a smile began to form on his lips. Lightly patting her head, he whispers: “Even though I don’t know who you are or where you’re from, I do know that you are my sister and no matter what happens in the future, I will always protect you.” Lightly smiling, Xiao Yan speeds up and breaks out of his line from Xun Er.

Her feet stopping, Xun Er stared with her beautiful eyes at the back of the young man that just talked with her. After pausing for a while, a smile begins to creep onto her delicate face.

Within the crowd, her figure was swaying back and forth, like a lotus, elegant and pretty...

“Sister? Xun Er is a very greedy girl though...” Tilting her head, Xun Er

mutters and then quickly catches up to the young man in front of her.

.....

Following Xiao Yan while he examines the stalls by the side, Xun Er and Xiao Yan slowly move into the more populated and expensive inner parts of the market. The people that come here to buy and sell usually have decent money or physical power.

While Xiao Yan was engrossed in trying to find a Monster Core, Xiao Xun who was bored, walked up to a clean stall and with her pale-white hand picks up a light green bracelet. The bracelet wasn't crafted with anything special but it had a hint of Ice Silver which made it feel cold to the touch, perfect for hot summer days. In addition, even though the material was quite plain, the craftsmanship wasn't bad...

Right when Xun Er decided to buy the bracelet, she remembered that she had loaned all of her money to Xiao Yan. Slightly turning around and seeing the busy young man, she could only helplessly shake her head and smile at the old stall owner. Putting down the bracelet, she lazily started moving forward... Her calm manner wouldn't let her ask anyone to buy anything for her, even if it was Xiao Yan....

After walking forward for a bit, right when the bored Xun Er decided to go back to Xiao Yan, a clear laughter rings from ahead.

"Huh, isn't this Ms. Xun Er? Hehe, I wouldn't have thought to find you here, it must be fate."

Her thin brow lightly furrowing, Xun Er tried to find the source of the voice but only saw a group of people. The group was following behind a luxuriously dressed young man.

The young man was only 20+ years old and was quite handsome. His face was slightly pale but his eyes were filled with heat and were staring at the young girl standing in front of him. Within his gaze was also an unrestrained hint of lust.

Chapter 12: Stay Away from Him

Looking at the delighted handsome youth, Xun Er's slim eyebrows wrinkled. Not paying attention to his call, she turned away.

"Miss Xun Er!"

Looking at Xun Er from the side, the handsome but pale young man became immediately anxious and quickly crossed to block her from the front.

Blocked by the youth, Xun Er stopped her steps. Her pair of long and beautiful eyes were lazily narrowed staring at him. Yet she did not utter a single word.

"Miss Xun Er..." Stared at by pupils that were like water drops and despite the fact that he was used to flirting with beauties, his breathing became somewhat hurried. His clever tongue had lost all of its use for the moment.

"Jia Lie Ao young master, if there isn't anything urgent, please get out the way. I still have to do something."

Looking at this somewhat flush youth, Xun Er finally spoke. Her soft and young voice made the young man's pale face flush with a sick red.

"Hehe, Miss Xun Er, have you come to the market to buy something? I'm quite free right now so why don't we look around the market together?" Taking a deep breath within his mind, Jia Lie Ao's smile was open and gentle. This smile along with his status and handsomeness had successfully landed him quite a few girls.

"Jia Lie Ao young master, I already said that I have something to do! Can you move aside?" Xun Er's small mouth curves upward and her voice was smooth without any hint of irritation.

Being rejected by Xun Er, the edges of Jia Lie Ao's mouth twitched but he kept his smile and pulled out a bracelet from his pockets. The bracelet was a light blue gold color and was made from Blue Gold. From the bracelet hanged a smoothed green ball-like monster core. A soft green was emitted

from the monster core and scattered its light on the bracelet, giving it a special hue. Looks like this intricate bracelet costs a lot!

"Hehe, since Miss Xun Er has something to do then I, Jia Lie Ao won't block you anymore." Jiao Lei Ao tightly clutched the bracelet and smiles: "This was a bracelet that I just bought in the market, even though it's not too expensive, it has a level one wood attribute monster core which greatly helps in the recovery of Dou Qi. Since Miss Xun Er hasn't become a Dou Zhe yet, this bracelet is perfect for you. This is just a small gift of mine so please don't say no. After all, I would lose face in front of my underlings..." At the end, Jia Lie Ao purposefully lowered his voice and the underlings around him, as if it was a play, grinned on cue.

Looking at Jia Lie Ao's actions, Xun Er's brow lifted. She didn't know how to deal with such a person.

Right when she was about to refuse, her sight fell onto the green monster core on the bracelet and remembered how Xiao Yan was busily trying to find a wood attribute monster core. Her long eyelashes lightly blinked and her impassive face relaxed a bit...

Looking at Xun Er's relaxed face, Jia Lie Ao's heart flutters happily and quickly pushes the Wood Attribute Bracelet forward: "Miss Xun Er, there's no need to be courteous. Jia Lie Clan and Xiao Clan are both in the top three clans of Wu Tang City so exchanging little gifts is common."

"I'll take the bracelet and remove the monster core and give to Xiao Yan ge-ge. As for the bracelet, when he's not paying attention... I'll throw it away." With this mischievous thought, Xun Er didn't hesitate anymore and stretches her hand out, about to take the bracelet. Suddenly a hand grabs her hand and stops her from taking the bracelet.

Right when her hand was grabbed, Xun Er pauses in shock before having the Dou Qi in her body flowing in order to protect herself. But right when her hand was about to go free from the grasp, a young male hmpf made her obediently stop struggling.

Looking behind her, Xun Er saw Xiao Yan. When her sight moved a bit higher, she saw a harsh young face.

“Don’t you know what he’s like?” Scowling at Xun Er, Xiao Yan criticized himself in his mind. Then he looks up and says: “Jia Lie Ao young master, your thought is graciously accepted by Xun Er but as for the gift, you should take it back.”

Looking at the destroyed atmosphere, a hint of anger flashed within Jia Lie Ao’s eyes. But, in front of Xun Er, he tried to keep his “gentlemanly” air and waxily smiles: “Xiao Yan young master, I saw that Miss Xun Er didn’t have any jewelry so I wanted to help her a bit. Do you not want to let her have a few small trinkets to accentuate her beauty?”

Helplessly sighing, Xiao Yan glances at the Wood Attribute bracelet in Jia Lie Ao’s hand and took out another green bracelet and with some frustration, asks: “Do you really like bracelets? Here you go, don’t take other people’s stuff for no reason. I already told you that there is no such thing as a free lunch. The ones who offer free stuff always have a hidden motive. With your innocent look, you may have been sold by someone and still wouldn’t know what had happened.”

Hearing Xiao Yan’s words that were obviously directed at him, Jia Lie Ao’s face becomes cold. But when he saw the bracelet on Xiao Yan’s hand, he couldn’t help but laugh.

The bracelet in Xiao Yan’s hands, from a material standpoint, couldn’t have costed more than 5 Gold Coins. While, his Wood Attribute Bracelet, which had an authentic monster core, cost an entire 1000+ gold coins. The two bracelets, no matter how you look at it, either price or actual usefulness, had a huge difference and Xiao Yan’s bracelet couldn’t even compare to the Wood Attribute Bracelet. So, when Jia Lie Ao saw Xiao Yan giving such a poor bracelet to the beautiful Xun Er, he couldn’t help but criticize Xiao Yan: “Xiao Yan, I know that you don’t have a high position in your clan, but... but why would you give such pitiful thing to Xun Er?”

Ignoring Jia Lie Ao’s taunt, Xiao Yan looked at the young girl who was staring at the bracelet in his hand and hurriedly asked: “Do you want it or not? If you don’t then I’ll just throw it away, it was only 2-3 gold coins.”

“Haa....” Hearing Xiao Yan’s words, not only did Jia Lie Ao start laughing,

his underlings also started to laugh at Xiao Yan with a ridiculing tone.

But the ridiculing laugh didn't continue for long before being cut off as if they had just had their necks cut off. On everyone was a hilariously stunned face.

Xun Er who had been stunned, responded quickly to Xiao Yan's words. Her two hands almost instinctively reached out and snatched the bracelet in Xiao Yan's hand. After getting the bracelet, Xun Er realized what she had done, perhaps she had acted a bit too impatient...

A light red blush appeared on her delicate face but Xun Er wasn't like other people and after a slight period of embarrassment, she graciously hooked the bracelet onto her white wrist. Raising her head and giving a coy smile, she said: "Thank you Xiao Yan ge-ge."

With an ugly face, Jia Lie Ao stared at Xun Er who was quite intimate with Xiao Yan. On his face was apparent jealousy and he said: "Hehe, I didn't realize that Miss Xun Er's preferences were so unique. I guess I've been mistaken."

Xiao Yan glances at Jia Lie Ao in front of him and his gaze landed on the gold star at his chest. He strangely thought: When I saw him last year, he was only 9 Duan Qi right? Who would have thought that he would be successful in compressing his Dou Qi Cyclone. But, to become a Dou Zhe at the age of 21, his talent is barely decent...

Seeing that Jia Lie Ao had no intention of leaving, Xiao Yan pursed his lips. His wasn't affected by the power and status behind Jia Lie Ao and since the Xiao Clan and Jia Lie Clan didn't have good relations in the first place, there was no need for him to act humble. Stroking his nose, Xiao Yan lightly said: "Jia Lia Ao young master, your womanizer habits are known by the entire Wu Tang City. Xun Er is still young and doesn't have time to play with your flirting games so hopefully you can go after other girls in the future."

"Stay away from him!"

After speaking to Jia Lie Ao, Xiao Yan ignored the green-faced Jia Lie Ao and used his age as an advantage to arrogantly speak to Xun Er.

“Okay.”

Xun Er’s agile eyes blinked and nodded without any hesitation. To her, Jia Lie Ao was just a stranger that she saw a couple of times while Xiao Yan, for her, was irreplaceable. Since Xiao Yan told her to stay away from Jia Lie Ao, she’ll just stay away from him.

The choice wasn’t a hard one for Xun Er.

Chapter 13: Black Metal Piece

Seeing Xun Er nod at Xiao Yan's words, Jia Lie Ao's mouth started twitching. He curled his fists and stared coldly at the calm and impassive young man before him.

Jia Lie Ao's underlings, seeing that their young master was quite angry, quickly walked forward and surrounded both, Xiao Yan and Xun. Their gazes revealing their bad intentions.

....

Even though it was deep within the market, there were still quite a few people around and they turned their questioning gazes towards the surrounded group. Xiao Yan and Jia Lie Ao had quite a reputation in Wu Tang City, Xiao Yan for his fall from genius to cripple and Jia Lie Ao for his less than honorable encounters with other women. Even though they were infamous, they were still well known within the city.

Looking Jia Lie Ao's group's movements, Xiao Yan's brow jumped and on his young face, a hint of confidence creped. Lightly turning his head, he whistled towards a spot within the market.

Seeing Xiao Yan's actions, everyone turned their head to the direction in which Xiao Yan whistled and saw the market's guards furiously coming over under the lead of Pei En.

With his fellow guards, Pei En rushed towards Xiao Yan and quickly, the market's guards surrounded Jia Lie Ao's underlings who were surrounding Xiao Yan and Xun.

"Third young master, anything wrong?" Walking up to Xiao Yan, Pei En swept his glance over Jia Lie Ao and then respectfully asked Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan lightly smiles and turned to face the green-faced Jia Lie Ao. He nonchalantly said: "Jia Lie Ao young master, this market is controlled by Xiao Clan, are you sure you want to fight here?"

Jia Lie Ao's eyes revealed his fear for Pei En but he immediately sneered at Xiao Yan: "Do you only know to rely on your clan? If you are a man..."

“What you want to say is, if I am a man then I would fight you one on one. Right?” Xiao Yan waved his hand and cut Jia Lie Ao off.

Jia Lie Ao sneered again and with a hint of challenge, he said: “Yup, are you afraid?”

Looking at the arrogant face of Jia Lie Ao, Xiao Yan helplessly sighed and puts his hand up to feel his forehead. Moments later, he raised his head and shrugs his shoulder and with innocence and naivety, he asked: “Jia Lie Ao young master, I would like to ask, how old are you?”

The edge of Jia Lie Ao’s mouth twitched and he doesn’t respond.

“Big guy, you’re already twenty one. How old am I? Fifteen! You’re actually asking a kid that hasn’t performed his coming of age ritual to fight you? Don’t you feel that your request is over the top, don’t you feel embarrassed?” Xiao Yan’s innocent appearance was so realistic that Xun Er beside him couldn’t help but let out a soft laugh.

“Haha...”

Hearing the young man’s words, the mercenary and merchant stall owners also let out laughs. Xiao Yan was right, at his current age, Xiao Yan could only be considered a kid but Jia Lie Ao would be considered an adult. A challenge of this kind made everyone look down upon Jia Lie Ao.

The laughter of the crowd was like a bucket of cold water and helped Jia Lie Ao regain his calm. From Xiao Yan’s maturity and calmness to his impassive attitude, it was extremely easy for people to forget how old he really was. Therefore, after Xiao Yan said his age, Jia Lie Ao finally remembered that the young man standing in front of him was only fifteen.

Gnashing his teeth, Jia Lie Ao looked at the leering guards behind Xiao Yan and realized that he didn’t have any chance of retaliation today. He could only shake his head and coldly say: “One more year and you’ll be undergoing the coming of age ritual right? Hehe, I think that someone as crippled as you, once you finish the coming of age ritual, will only be sent to some remote and poor village. At that time, you won’t even have the power to enter Wu Tang City, pretty pitiful.”

Xiao Yan lightly smiles and nonchalantly shrugs his shoulders.

Jia Lie Ao's eyelids flickered. He didn't know why but whenever he saw the calm face of the young man in front of him, a mysterious rage boiled within him. You're only a cripple and trying to act like you know everything...

Forcefully suppressing his anger, Jia Lie Ao let out a cold hmpf and with a wave of his hand, commands his underlings to exit the crowd.

"Oh right...." His steps stopping, Jia Lie Ao seemed to have remembered something and turning back, he said: " Xiao Yan young master, I heard that your Xiao Clan had their marriage with the Nalan Clan revoked. Hehe, actually, that isn't unexpected. With your Qi talent, you just can't match the Miss Nalan. Haha..." After saying that, Jia Lie Ao left laughing.

Xiao Yan's gaze coldly followed the exit of Jia Lie Ao. Tightly holding Xun Er who was about to rush out, he quietly said: "He's just a mad dog. If he bites you, why should you bite back?"

"But he.. went too far. We can't just let him off like this?" Her eyebrows furrowing, Xun Er

indignantly replied.

"There will always be an opportunity..." Xiao Yan smirked and the coldness coming from his voice made Pei En shuddered. A lion's bite might not be that scary but a lion that knows patience is another story, a scary one...

"Uncle Pei En, sorry for troubling you." Xiao Yan turned back and smiled gently toward Pei En's group. The previously intense atmosphere all of a sudden changed into a lighthearted mood.

Impressed by the control over emotions that Xiao Yan exercised, Pei En's smile was reinforced by a sense of respect. Even with Xiao Yan's lack of talent, Xiao Yan's future accomplishments probably wouldn't be too shabby with his mental prowess.

"Haha, third young master's joking. This is Xiao Clan's territory, we wouldn't allow Jia Lie Clan to do as they please here." Pei Em smiled and

seeing that Xiao Yan started to look around, he quickly took his leave along with his men.

Looking at the exiting Pei En and his group, Xiao Yan turned around and ruffled Xun Er's hair and said slightly forcefully: "A level 1 monster core made you forget your morals? You know as well as I do what kind of person Jia Lie Ao is. The moment you take his stuff, he would definitely ask for favors."

Straightening her hair, Xun Er flipped her hands upwards: "He wanted to give it me, it was free."

Xiao Yan rolled his eyes and didn't know whether to laugh or cry: "It isn't like that's something precious, did you really need to act like that? Don't forget, you're the young genius in Xiao Clan..."

Xun Er wrinkles her nose and raised the bracelet on her wrist. She taunted: "So Xiao Yan ge-ge has also been noticing Xun Er."

Xiao Yan stayed silent and pulling on Xun Er's hand, they walked towards some stalls deeper in the market...

After walking past quite a few stalls, Xiao Yan's feet finally stopped. He bent down and stared at a green orb that still had a trace of blood on the stall and said: "I've finally found it."

Moving his hand across the stall, Xiao Yan's was about to grab the monster core when his hand stiffened. A strange foreboding struck his mind...

Licking his lips, Xiao Yan continued to pick up the monster core but his gaze, as if by accident, swept across the stall....

Moments later, his gaze landed on a piece of black metal that was displayed beside the monster core.

The Black Metal Piece seemed extremely old with many specks of rust and even a couple spots of dirt. It looked as if it had just been excavated.

"Hey, Yan Brat, buy the black metal piece, it's something good..."

Right when Xiao Yan was confused about why he felt such a strong

feeling towards the seemingly worthless metal, Yao Lao's voice sounded in his mind.

Chapter 14: Vacuum Hand

Listening to the voice inside his head, Xiao Yan blinked and secretly nodded.

Instead of immediately grabbing the black metal piece, Xiao Yan gently picked up the green monster core that was still dripping blood and looking at the shabby looking mercenary standing behind the stall, he asked cheerfully: "Which magic monster did this monster core comes from?"

"Haha, the eyes of young master are really good! This is a monster core from a first level magic monster named Swallow Wood Fox. It is a high quality core! Our Sharp Teeth Mercenary Group waited 3 days and ambushed 5 Swallow Wood Foxes before finally obtaining this magic core..." Noticing Xiao Yan's luxurious outfit, the mercenary rapidly advertised his wares.

"If this object is to young master's liking, I think 500 gold coins would be a good price. Haha, while obtaining this core, we had several brothers who got injured quite heavily..."

Xiao Yan slowly wiped the remaining blood off of the magic core, noticing they haven't completely clotted yet. He nodded slightly and glanced towards the two golden stars on the chest of the mercenary and commented: "Too expensive! Normally a level one magic core's price would only be from 400 to 450 gold coins, furthermore, even if the Swallow Wood Fox is a magic beast, its attack power isn't too high. Are your underlings not Dou Zhes?"

The corner of his mouth slightly jerking, the mercenary laughed dryly. He did not expect the youth standing in front of him to be so knowledgeable about the magic core market and replied: "470 gold coins then, no more no less, we have to live by this..."

"Hahh..." Sighing under the Mercenary's anxious eyes, Xiao Yan bent down and randomly grabbed many things from the stall, conveniently including the mysterious metal piece in the mess. Then he said: "470 gold coins for all of these..."

Looking at the goods on Xiao Yan's hands, the mercenary let out a relieved sigh since none of the items in Xiao Yan's hands were expensive...

"Alright!"

Cheerfully producing some gold coins, Xiao Yan did not waste another moment and left immediately...

"Hah! Brat, to be so cautious in a mundane task of buying things!" The elder's taunting voice sounded in Xiao Yan's head as he turned to leave the shop.

"Those bastards are all swindlers, they'll immediately increase the price if you show interest in their wares. I don't want to lose money for something stupid like that..." After answering, Xiao Yan stopped paying attention to the Elder inside his ring and leisurely exited the market and returned to the clan with Xun Er.

After parting with Xun Er, Xiao Yan impatiently ran back to his room and carefully locked the door...

Turning his head and seeing the Elder who left the ring since god-knows-when, Xiao Yan brought out the recently purchased herbs and magic core. He hastily asked: "All the required ingredients are here, what do we have to do?"

The Elder cheerfully laughed and his gaze scanned the ingredients on the table before suddenly asking: "Don't you want to know what that black metal piece is?"

"Eh?" Xiao Yan paused before realizing that the elder was referring to his "accidental" purchase. He quickly took out the Black Metal Piece and examined it from top to bottom. But after examining it, his brows furrowed and asked: "This, what does it do?"

Yao Lao took the Black Metal Piece and laughed: "There seems to be a Dou Technique inside here. And, the creator of this metal piece was probably also an alchemist because only people that have a strong soul perception can feel the power within this metal piece."

"Dou Technique?" Xiao Yan's eyes brightened and he hurriedly asked:

“What level is it?”

In the Dou Qi Mainland, the importance of Dou Techniques isn't lower than Qi Methods. A strong Dou Technique would allow one to perform at a level far beyond what they are capable of. For example, a Dou Zhe being able to fight a Dou Shi even though his Dou Qi is at a disadvantage.

Dou Techniques and Qi Methods are both split into four levels of decreasing power, Tian, Di, Xuan and Huang. Normally, the Dou Techniques that are easily accessible are at most High Huang level and for higher Dou Techniques, one would have to go to a large clan or faction.

Of course, Dou Qi Mainland is huge and there are some special circumstances in which the top Dou Techniques are lost and found by some lucky individual. The black metal piece that Xiao Yan has right now was probably the lost work of some ancient person...

Yao Lao turned the metal plate around and smiled: “Vacuum Hand : Low Xuan level!”

“Low Xuan level?” Xiao Yan's face was filled with happiness; he didn't expect that the “trash” he purchased would have a Xuan level Dou Technique. In his own clan, the Xiao Clan, the highest Dou Technique was only a Middle Xuan level and only the clan leader and some elders could learn it.”

“Vacuum Hand: If trained to max, it can suck up boulders that are thousands of pound. Against enemies, it can forcibly suck the blood out of their body.”

“Forcibly suck blood from a body?” His face full of surprise, Xiao Yan swallowed dryly and exclaimed: “This... This is awesome! Once the blood leaves the body, they would die right?”

“Don't be happy yet. This only works if your level is higher than your opponent. If you meet someone stronger than you, they can use the chance to get close to you and the unlucky would be you...” Yao Lao carelessly threw the metal plate to the side, looks like he doesn't think too highly of the Dou Technique.

Yao Lao was of high status and naturally had high standards but for Xiao Yan, this was a high level Dou Technique! He immediately happily picked it up and laughed: “Even with that, it’s better than the Dou Techniques in the clan. I’ll learn this from now on...”

“Hah, with your 3rd Duan Qi, it would be amazing if you could pull up a tree branch with your Vacuum Hand and you want to suck the blood out of someone....” Shaking his head, Yao Lao heavily criticized Xiao Yan.

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan ignored Yao Lao and smiled while hugging the metal piece.

“Look at yourself, having a Low Xuan Dou Technique makes you this happy. You’re embarrassing me ...” Helplessly shaking his head, Yao Lao grabbed the monster core on the table and ordered Xiao Yan: “Go get a huge bowl of water.”

Seeing that Yao Lao was about to start refining the pill, Xiao Yan hurriedly put away the Black Metal Piece and cheerfully went to prepare...

.....

In the calm room, Yao Lao picked up the Purple Bluegrass with his left hand. Moments later, he lets out a deep breath and a white flame appears in his hand...

When the flame appeared, the temperature within the room rose exponentially.

Without blinking, Xiao Yan stared at the white ball of flame. Although he didn’t know the process of refining pills by Alchemists, to materialize Dou Qi was an impossible task for even his father...

With a calm face, the white fire in Yao Lao’s hands expanded and swallowed the Purple Bluegrass.... Within the flame, the Purple Bluegrass instantly became a green liquid ball...

Yao Lao’s right hand picked up another stalk of Purple Bluegrass and threw it into the white fire...

After throwing all three stalks of Purple Bluegrass into the fire, the ball

of green liquid became visibly bigger.

The green liquid slowly shriveled within the fire; the high temperature relentlessly burned the impurities within the green liquid...

With the flame, the green liquid became smaller and smaller in volume. After a few seconds, it was only about the size of a thumb...

Afterwards, Yao Lao threw the two stalks of Bone Washing Flowers into the flame and after they finished burning, the remaining liquid mixed with the original green liquid...

After that was the refinement of the monster core.

The third step took a whole hour but Yao Lao still seemed full of energy and without any signs of fatigue.

After an entire hour, the tough monster core had become a ball of green liquid. The violent energy within the monster core was softened by Yao Lao's magical formula...

On his hand, the white flame slowly disappeared.

Looking at the green ball floating on top of Yao Lao's hand, Xiao Yan rubbed his hands together. With his superior Soul Perception, he could clearly feel the bountiful energy within the energy ball...

"Teacher, do I just eat it?" Xiao Yan blinked his eyes and asked impatiently.

"If you want to die then eat it. With your Qi paths, you would become a true cripple within seconds." Giving Xiao Yan a white eye, Yao Lao flicks the ball and it accurately flew into the bowl of water. Immediately, the bowl of clear water turned to a dark green shade.

"From now on, you should train in there. With your talent and barring any unforeseen circumstances, you should be able to get to 7 Duan Qi within a year." Yao Lao claps the dust off of his hands and lightly smiles towards Xiao Yan.

With obvious happiness, Xiao Yan hurriedly nodded his head.

"Oh, I almost forgot. This medicine will only last for two months. Which

means, you need to go buy the materials that you got today again every two months." Yao Lao revealed a sly smile.

Xiao Yan happiness disappeared from his face and he nodded his head with reluctance.

"Dammit, only rich people can afford to use this stuff..."

Chapter 15: Training

The warm sun filtered through the window and lazily sprayed into the tidy room.

Within the room, a young man with a bare upper body was sitting crossed within a wooden bowl. His two hands were knit together into a strange symbol. His two eyes were shut tightly while his breath was calm but powerful.

In the wooden bowl beneath him, a mysterious green liquid was strangely sparkling.

As he trained longer, the green liquid within the bowl began to slowly evaporate, giving off a light green stream of air. Stream slowly lifted upwards and squirmed into the young man's nose with his breathing.

Once the stream was inside his body, the young man's face became shiny and smooth like White Jade.

As if he felt the ever increasing Dou Qi within his body, the young man's face revealed a light smile.

After confirming his success, the young man didn't stop there. He still had his eyes shut tight and kept his hands in the same position. He didn't even budge and maintained his maximally efficient position as he greedily sucked up the energy within the green liquid.

The green liquid sticking to the young man's body was slowly absorbed by his skin, strengthening his bones and cleaning his Qi paths...

Under the young man's restless absorbance, more and more green streams came up from the bowl and slowly, they became so dense that they covered the young man's naked body in a layer of mist.

Under the restless training, the bright sunshine that came in through the window slowly became weaker and the room became a lot cooler.

In the wooden bowl, the young man gathered in the final wisps of green air and his eyelashes twitched before opening to reveal two pitch-black eyes.

Within the pitch black eyes, a white glow passed through but this time, it had a hint of green.

Slowly letting out a breath, the young man quickly stood up and let the cool water droplets flow off of his body. Taking a lazy stretch and feeling the abundant Dou Qi within his body, the young man muttered: "At this pace, I can probably get to the fifth Duan Qi in two months..."

After preparing everything, Xiao Yan stayed in his room for an entire half month. In the time he stayed in his room, besides eating and attending bodily functions, he had been training his Qi non-stop.

Even though training was extremely boring and tiring, it was nothing compared to the taunts and ridicules that Xiao Yan had endured for the past three years.

The three full years of taunts had taught him how important strength was in this world....

Even though the days passed tiresomely, the results of them were pleasing.

The effects of Yao Lao's bowl of elixir was much stronger than what Xiao Yan and even the creator of it, Yao Lao had thought it would have. Yao Lao had predicted that it would take at least a month for Xiao Yan to get to 4 Duan Qi, but Xiao Yan only took half that time....

At this, even Yao Lao was surprised at the speed and efficiency in which Xiao Yan trained. Even though Xiao Yan had done this before, the speed at which he was going right now, isn't a bit too incredible?

The most important and toughest part about training Dou Qi is in the basics. The 10 Duan Qi would take people 10 to even 20 years... Of course, once a person becomes a Dou Zhe then their training speed would increase exponentially. If one can only raise one Duan Qi in a year before becoming a Dou Zhe then that same person could probably go up a couple of stars in a year once after becoming a Dou Zhe....

When the training speed was slanted towards later times, Xiao Yan's performance in half a month was surprising to say the least.

....

Walking out of the bowl without hesitation, Xiao Yan looked back at the lighter green liquid in the bowl. The lighter color was definitely due to his training and he helplessly shook his head while whispering: "Can this sustain for another month and a half?"

Wiping off the remaining water droplets, Xiao Yan randomly put on a fresh suit of clothing and crawled onto his soft bed. After doing so, he reached behind his pillow to take out the pitch black metal piece.

The rust on the steel piece had already been wiped off by Xiao Yan to reveal a smooth and glowing surface. It was quite mysterious.

For the past half month, Xiao Yan had been intently studying this metal piece that contained a Low Xuan level Dou technique whenever he took a break from training.

In the half month, under the instructions of Yao Lao, Xiao Yan finally had a bit of understanding of the techniques involved. But because of the lack of Dou Qi, he couldn't use it for anything useful which made Xiao Yan a little disappointed.

.....

Placing the metal piece between his two palms, Xiao Yan closed his eyes and used his soul perception to observe the black metal plate.

With the calming of Xiao Yao's breath, the room was once again peaceful.

Another long silence passed before Xiao Yan opened his eyes again and raised his right hand. His right hand was curved into a claw and his light Dou Qi, under Xiao Yan's insistence, quickly went through the few Qi and pressure points on his palm to become a pulling force.

"Peng..."

The ceramic vase that Xiao Yan pointed to made a few circles before falling down the tables. And with a clear crash, it shattered into countless pieces.

"Hah, even though the Dou Technique is at the Xuan level, my Dou Qi is too low and I can barely use the technique." Seeing the destruction that he had caused, Xiao Yan whispered to himself: "Looking at the power it has right now, if I want to have enough force to vacuum a person towards me then I need to be at 7 Duan Qi."

"Whatever, let's go to our clan hall to find some lower level Dou Techniques. This vacuum hand, it won't be of much use for some time. But since I can train my Dou Qi again, I don't need to use my foolish method of training that I used before..." Sighing again, Xiao Yan climbed off of his bed and glanced at the motionless black ring before leaving the house.

Wincing his eyes and adjusting to the blazing sun, Xiao Yan carefully closed his door before lazily walking onto the stone path towards the clan's back rooms.

To the sides of the stone path were emerald green willows. The bountiful green felt soothing and sharply contrasted with the scorching heat.

Turning onto a different path, a young girl's laughter greeted him.

Because of the disturbed calm, Xiao Yan furrowed his brows and following the source of the laughter, he saw a couple of young girls coming towards him from another path.

Crowded by other girls, a pretty girl was laughing. The charming face that she had completely overshadowed the other girls beside her.

She was the girl that was second to Xun Er in the Dou Qi testing, Xiao Mei.

Glancing at the girl that had once stuck to his side calling countless biao-ges, a flash of unrestrained mocking went across Xiao Yan's face. Lightly shaking his head, Xiao Yao retrieved his sight.

TL: Biao Ge is brother not in one's direct family. This is a formal saying compared to ge-ge which is more of an familiar saying.

When Xiao Mei reached the road Xiao Yan was on, Xiao Mei's charming laughter died out as she had seen Xiao Yan...

The sun scattered its light and made the impassive young man with his hands behind his head indescribably attractive.

A pair of pretty, large eyes stared at the young man coming closer, and trying to distinguish whether there was a light smile or ridicule hanging on the edges of his mouth, Xiao Mei mentally gravitated towards Xiao Yan. Suddenly, she felt as if she had lost something...

Three years ago, that young man, on the edge of his mouth, had that intoxicating curve.

Chapter 16: Xiao Ning

Seeing the young man slowly coming over, Xiao Mei and her group slowed to a halt. Their previous laughter had also died out.

The young girls by Xiao Mei's side widened their eyes while looking at the young man that was once the clan's pride. The expressions on their faces were varied, from sympathy to something else.

Xiao Mei stopped in place. In her mind, she still felt attached and wanted to chat with the young man that had once captured her heart. But, reality told her that the difference between the two of them was too large for them to be together and wasting time on a cripple isn't exactly smart.

Her brows furrowed before relaxing, in Xiao Mei's mind she thought: Let's say hi, no matter what, he's still my Biao-Ge.

Ignorant to Xiao Mei's thoughts, Xiao Yan still had his hands behind his head and was lazily walking over.

Watching the ever closer Xiao Yan, a smile appeared on Xiao Mei's face but the actions of the young man froze the smile on her small face, making it seem as if she was making a weird face.

With both hands behind his head, Xiao Yan ignored the group and looked straight as he walked past the young girls without any hesitation.

Opening her red, small mouth at the young man's shadow, Xiao Mei was shocked. With her beauty, when had she ever had such a horrible treatment? She felt an embarrassed anger and couldn't help but yell: "Xiao Yan Biao-Ge."

Stopping, Xiao Yan didn't turn around and his bland tone was emotionless, as if he was talking to a stranger: "What?"

The emotionless and bland voice stunned Xiao Mei and she whispered: "Nothing..."

Xiao Yan's brows jumped but he shook his head and started walking forward again.

Watching the disappearing shadow, Xiao Mei angrily stomped her feet and went onto a different path.

Rounding a turn, Xiao Yan looked up to a spacious room. On the plaque of the room were three flamboyant and blood red words: Dou Technique Hall!

Hearing the yells within the Dou Technique Hall, Xiao Yan was quite surprised. Normally, no one came to the hall so why was it so noisy today?

Shrugging his shoulders, Xiao Yan stepped forward and entered the Dou Technique Hall.

Once Xiao Yan went inside the hall, quite a few cheers from other clan members greeted him.

The Dou Technique Hall was split into an east and west section. In the east section were the clan's Dou Techniques while the west section was a large training field. Right now, there were quite a few people gathered around the training field and watching two people at the middle of the field."

"Looking at the density of Xiao Ning ge's Dou Qi, is he at 8 Duan Qi?"

"Hehe, just two months ago, Xiao Ning biao-ge got to 8 Duan Dou Qi."

"But even though he has 8 Duan Dou Qi, Xun Er biao-mei has 9 Duan Dou Qi. Xiao Ning biao-ge doesn't have a high chance of winning."

"Good luck Xun Er biao-mei!"

Hearing the voices from the crowd, Xiao Yan paused his footsteps and glanced around at the training field. Finally, his interested gaze landed on the young girl wearing a light purple dress.

How does she have the time to fight with others? Xiao Yan thought in his mind before going to the east side of the hall and taking a random black scroll from a shelf. Opening up the scroll, large yellow words appeared.

Middle Yellow: Shattering Rock Hand!

Lazily leaning on the bookshelf, Xiao Yan read the training methods to

the Shattering Rock Hand while occasionally glancing at the ferocious battle in the Training Field.

The spacious hall seemed to be separated into two worlds. The west side was noisy while the east side was peaceful and calm.

Xun er's opponent was a young man at about the age of 17-18. He was quite handsome and similar to Jia Lei Ao who Xiao Yan had seen the other day.

The young man was called Xiao Ning and was the top elder 's grandson. Even though he was only 17, he had already had gotten to 8 Duan Qi and in the entire clan, only Xun Er was better than him.

Xiao Yan had a neutral impression of this biao-ge. They only occasionally met and always said customary greetings before hurrying off. Maybe it was because of the unfriendly atmosphere between his father and the top elder but Xiao Yan was always able to feel animosity emanating from him. But while Xiao Yan was "crippled", he had never went out of his way to taunt or tease Xiao Yan...

Lightly smiling, Xiao Yan discarded his thoughts and went back to studying the Shattering Rock Hand.

On the training field, Xun Er was like a light purple butterfly that avoided the swift attacks by Xiao Ning, gracefully and elegantly. However, on her delicate face, no emotions such as weariness or the like surfaced.

After blocking another one of Xiao Ning's attacks, Xun Er's gaze lazily swept across the hall but suddenly her movements stopped.

Seeing the absorbed young man in the east side of the hall, a light and elegant smile floated onto Xun Er's face.

The girl's sudden smile made the spectators stunned at the beauty of Xun Er.

"Xun Er Biao Mei, watch out!" Right when Xun Er was distracted, a young voice called out from within the crowd.

Feeling the violent pressure coming from behind her, Xun Er furrowed

her brows but her gaze stayed on the young man below the bookshelf.

At the same time, Xiao Yan had lifted his head and seeing the sneak attack directed at Xun Er, he furrowed his brows and shook his head. His look revealed a restrained worry.

Seeing the worried look on Xiao Yan's face, Xun Er mischievously blinked her beautiful eyes. Suddenly, she took a small step toward the left. Even though it was just a step, it strangely helped her dodge all of Xiao Ning's attacks...

While she was dodging, her clear white hand sparkled gold and went straight between Xiao Ning's hands and lightly landed on his chest.

Turning around in a circle, Xun Er gracefully counteracted the force while Xiao Ning had to step back a dozen steps and out of the training field.

To be able to defeat Xiao Ning with one attack, the spectators all gave thunderous applause to Xiao Xun.

"Hehe, Xun Er Biao Mei is really at the top in the younger generation of the clan. You're really strong." Even though Xiao Ning had just been defeated by Xun Er, he had a smile as he walked back to the middle of the training field.

Calmly looking at the girl in front of him, the fervent love in Xiao Ning's eyes wasn't hidden at all.

Even though they were technically Biao Ge/Mei, Xiao Ning knew that in the entire clan, many of the members didn't have close blood relations and for Xiao Xun Er, he knew that she wasn't related by blood to him.

As if she didn't feel the fervent gaze of Xiao Ning, Xun Er respectfully shook her head and said: "Xiao Ning Biao Ge let me win." After saying that, she didn't wait for a response from Xiao Ning and went straight to the eastern part of the hall with a big smile.

Being the center of attention, Xun Er's movements were detected by everyone and following the intended path of Xun Er, they found Xiao Yan.

Even though Xiao Yan was now the center of attention to the previous spectators, Xiao Yan didn't look up and was absorbed in his own world.

Chapter 17: Conflict

“Xiao Yan ge-ge.”

The young girl shyly stood in front of Xiao Yan while her delicate, white hands fluttered behind her. She slightly leaned forward and her beautiful eyes twinkled into crescent moons. On her beautiful face were two light dimples.

Shifting his gaze from the scroll in front of him, Xiao Yan peered at the young girl in front of him and then turned his gaze to include the entire hall. Seeing the fervent stares aimed at him, he couldn't help but say: “Girl, I know your charm is quite large but you don't need for me to share it, do you?”

TL: The “girl” used by Xiao Yan isn't a mean nickname but a common and familiar saying to younger (female) family members.

“Hehe.” Smiling, Xun Er sat next to Xiao Yan and lazily stretched backwards causing her charming curves to be revealed by her tight outfit. Randomly taking a scroll from the bookshelf, Xun Er stared at Xiao Yan before asking, “Xiao Yan ge-ge got to 4th Duan Qi?”

Hearing that, Xiao Wan who was absorbed by his scroll looked up. For the first 10 Duan Qi, the Dou Qi stays weak and almost undetectable. Unless one actively used Dou Qi or an examination monument was used, it is impossible to find out what Duan Qi someone has. But just a moment ago, Xun Er only looked at Xiao Yao for a couple of seconds and determined what Duan Qi he was at. Very surprising...

This girl, who is she? The Dou Techniques that she had just used in her fight with Xiao Ning was definitely a high leveled Dou Technique and definitely not one owned by Xiao Clan...Thinking about the few inconsistencies with Xun Er, Xian Yan tilted his head to look at the smiling Xun Er beside him. Shrugging his shoulders, he nodded: “4th Duan.”

Seeing Xiao Yan nod, the smile on Xun Er's face widened and she said: “It's related to your training for the past half month right?”

“Yeah.” Slightly nodding, Xiao Yan didn’t deny it and returned his gaze to the scroll while asking: “How do you have the time to come out and compete with someone?”

“I’m bored!” Imitating Xiao Yan’s shrugs, Xun Er smiled while showing a sorrowful face: “After last time, Xiao Yan ge-ge hasn’t come to see Xun Er. Are you afraid that Xun Er will force you to return the money?”

Xiao Yan paused and awkwardly laughed: “The Coming of Age Ritual is next year so do you think I have time to not train?” Raising his head and seeing the sad face on Xun Er, he lightly patted Xun Er’s head and whispered: “I’ll try to find time to be with Xun Er from now on.”

Hearing Xiao Yan’s promise, Xun Er’s small face relaxed. But her talk with Xiao Yan had made every single person in the hall red-eyed at Xiao Yan.

Looking at the two of them below the bookshelf, Xiao Ning’s face was extremely ugly and his hand curled into fists before relaxing and then curled them back up again...

Being the grandson of the top elder of the clan, Xiao Ning had always felt that he was special. Towards Xun Er, Xiao Ning had already, in his own mind, set her as his wife. Of course it was one-sided...

But seeing his “wife” was flirting was someone else made Xiao Ning extremely envious, more importantly the person whom Xun Er was flirting with was the “cripple” of the clan.

As rage surged in his eyes, Xiao Ning let out a huge breath and put on a calm and welcoming smile. Adjusting his messy clothes, he walked towards the two under the eyes of everyone in the hall.

In the hall, the spectators happily smirked when they saw Xiao Ning walking towards Xun Er and Xiao Yan. Of course, their smirks were not directed at Xiao Ning but rather at the seemingly ignorant Xiao Yan.

Gazing over the Qi Paths depicted on the scroll, Xiao Yan memorized the pressure points and Qi paths necessary for Shattering Rock Hand.

Letting out a breath, Xiao Yan’s originally relaxed brows furrowed. With

his strong Soul Perception, Xiao Yan was able to observe the actions of everyone within the hall, including Xiao Ning who was walking towards him.

This girl brings so much trouble! Sighing, Xiao Yan rolled up the scroll in his hand.

“Hehe, Xiao Yan Biao-Di, are you here to learn Dou Techniques? Do you need Biao-Ge, me to help you find a couple of high levelled ones? For some of the techniques, I don’t think that you have the right to access them.” Smiling in front of Xiao Yan, Xiao Ning spoke arrogantly.

TL: Biao Di is the young version of Biao Ge which is older brother not in one’s immediate family

Xiao Yan placed the scroll back onto the bookshelf and shook his head: “Thanks for the offer but I don’t think I need them right now.”

“Oh, hehe, I forgot... Xiao Yan Biao-Di only has 3 Duan Qi so it would be pretty hard to learn high level techniques.” Lightly massaging his forehead, Xiao Ning smiled. The ridicule in his tone was also displayed on his face.

Xiao Yan sighed again: Xiao Ning was ridiculing him on purpose...

A slight curve appeared on Xiao Yan’s face while he said: “I know you’re trying to get Xun Er’s attention but, I have to say, you are quite childish...”

Hearing the ruthless words of Xiao Yan, Xiao Ning’s face darkened. He had never thought that the normally silent Xiao Yan would have the courage to stand up against him. He sneered and said: “Looks like Xiao Yan Biao-Di has an opinion about me. How about we test out our skills? It’ll help me see how much Biao-Di has improved in the past few years.”

“Shall I test my skills against you?” Placing down her scroll, Xun Er looked up coldly.

Xiao Ning’s eyelid jumped when he saw Xun Er speaking up for Xiao Yan. With his envy burning even higher, Xiao Ning taunted: “Do you only know to hide behind women?”

“Why didn’t you dare to say such things three years ago?”

Xiao Yan tiptoed to reach for another scroll, blew off the dust on it and emotionlessly replied to Xian Ning.

To be honest, Xiao Yan’s emotionless and relaxed appearance, in the eyes of people who aren’t too friendly with him, made them feel as if there was something stuck on their chest.

Xiao Ning grinded his teeth together, making ji ji sounds but even though he was enraged, he didn’t dare hurt Xiao Yan since no matter how horrible Xiao Yan’s talent was, he was still the son of the clan leader.

Taking a deep breath, Xiao Ning stared at Xiao Yan and coldly said: “Xiao Yan, you’re no longer the genius you were three years ago. The you right now, a cripple! You don’t deserve Xun Er, if you are a man then you would leave right now. Or else, hehe, even though I can’t fight you right now, next year, when you perform the Coming of Age Ritual, you have to accept the challenge by a clansmen. If you don’t want to become a real cripple then I would suggest for you to get out of here right now and go hide in some poor remote place where you’d live out the rest of your life!”

Hearing the threats Xiao Ning made, the edges of Xiao Yan’s mouth curved upwards and he tilted his head to inspect Xiao Ning with a strange gaze. Afterwards, he rolled his eyes, picked up the scroll and walked outwards.

Seeing Xiao Yan’s movements, Xiao Ning believed that Xiao Yan had grudgingly agreed to his words but before he could celebrate his “victory”, a sentence came from Xiao Yan’s mouth and made Xiao Ning’s face green.

“Alright, next year... try to beat me into a cripple.”

Chapter 18: Xuan High Level Dou Technique - Octane Blast

Ignoring the cold gazes behind him, Xiao Yan hugged the scroll and checked it out with the manager of the Dou Technique Hall. Then, he, along with Xun Er, lazily walked out of the hall while chatting.

“Brat, just wait. When you get kicked out of the clan, I’ll have all the time in the world for revenge! Without the clan leader’s protection, you are nothing!” Watching the disappearing Xiao Yan, Xiao Ning felt a fury burn in his chest. As if to show his dedication, he smacked the bookshelf next to him, leaving a light handprint.

After leaving the Dou Technique Hall, Xiao Yan first accompanied Xun Er to nearby mountains for an entire afternoon before going back to his room when the sky turned dark.

After getting back to his room and closing the door, Xiao Yan’s shoulders sagged down. After placing his scroll on a nearby table and drinking a cup of tea he fearfully said: “This girl, she sure can walk.”

“That girl’s history isn’t normal either.” An old voice resounded through the room.

Tiredly raising his head and seeing the ghost-like Yao Lao, Xiao Yan curled his lips and asked: “Does teacher know her history?”

“Hehe, I think I know a bit...” Yao Lao smiled but when he saw Xiao Yan’s curious glance, he said: “Don’t ask. It’s useless to you right now. So, it’s better if you don’t waste your effort on it. What I can say is that her background is pretty powerful.”

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan gave Yao Lao a middle finger.

“Why did you go get this trash? Do you think that you have a lot of time?” Yao Lao came to the table and flipped through the scroll, only to be appalled by it.

“Trash?” Xiao Yan cried out: “Besides Vacuum Hand, I don’t know any

other Dou Techniques. Before, I only knew to train restlessly and didn't know any Dou Techniques and only the Huang Level Dou Techniques can be learned by anyone in the clan. If I don't learn these, what would I use to defeat others in the Coming of Age Ritual?"

"Ohh, so you want to swindle a Dou Technique from me..." The shrewd Yao Lao understood Xiao Yan's intent immediately.

Even though Xiao Yan had his plan exposed, he didn't pretend as if that wasn't his plan and instead looked at Yao Lao with puppy eyes.

"What's so great about Dou Techniques? Once you learn Alchemy, people will be fighting to gift you high level Dou Techniques!" Yao Lao lightly smiled and ignored the ever darkening face of Xiao Yan.

"But I need high level Dou Techniques, Right Now!" Xiao Yan said depressedly.

Seeing the sad Xiao Yan, Yao Lao laughed cheerfully: "Whatever, after all you are my student, although somewhat pitiful. So that you don't become a cripple, I'll teach you something!"

Hearing that, Xiao Yan perked up; he was very curious as to what kind of Dou Technique his mysterious teacher would give him.

"Even though your vacuum hand is Xuan level, its somewhat weak for a technique at that level. Since your Dou Qi isn't too strong right now, I'll teach you a Dou Technique that's at the Xuan level but only needs for you to be at 5 Duan Qi to be useful."

"What tier in the Xuan level?" Hearing that the technique was another Xuan level Dou Techniques, the eyes of Xiao Yan lit up and he asked while licking his lips.

"I think it was Xuan High level. I remember that the owner of this Dou Technique begged me to accept it. Even though I didn't have much interest in such things, he was really persistent so I accepted and made a pill for him." Yao Lao carelessly said. His casual mentionings made the Xuan level Dou Technique seem like trash!

"Xuan High level? Begging to give you it?" A few black lines appeared on

the forehead of Xiao Yan. The technique that was a whole tier higher than the top Dou Technique in the entire Xiao Clan was worthless in the eyes of Yao Lao! Xiao Yan didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the huge difference.

"Close your eyes and focus, I'll teach it to you." After ordering Xiao Yan, Yao Lao stretched out his finger and lightly tapped Xiao Yan's forehead.

With a slight headache, Xiao Yan felt a huge amount of information flood into his brain.

"Octane Blast: Xuan High Level Dou Technique, close-combat Dou Technique. Focus' on attacks and when mastered, attacks have eight different forces that stack up and the power is equal to a Di Low level Dou Technique!"

Slowly regaining his senses and quickly skimming over the new information, Xiao Yan let out a breath, the attack is equal to a Di Low level Dou Technique?

In the Dou Qi Mainland, whether its a Dou Technique or a Qi Method, the difference between a Xuan level technique and a Di level technique was enormous. The Di level technique would be on a completely different level and yet this Octane Blast claims that it can rival a Di level technique with its attack!

Swallowing dryly, Xiao Yan's eyes became blank. If I really learn this Dou Technique then I can probably beat up Xiao Ning with my 4 Duan Qi...

"Don't be too greedy. Even though Octane Blast doesn't have high requirements of one's Dou Qi, it has a huge toll on the body. This technique is a close combat Dou Technique and with your weak arms and legs, if you really try to use it, you'll probably end up with broken limbs before you even touch your opponent." Yao Lao's voice was like a bowl of cold water and washed away Xiao Yan's excitement.

"How would I increase the strength of my body?" After pausing, Xiao Yan hurriedly asked.

"Raising Dou Qi is the best way to increase the strength of one's body.

With higher Dou Qi, the body will become stronger. Of course, if you want to go faster, than you would need some external stimulus.” Yao Lao’s eyes twinkled with mischief.

“What external stimulus?” Watching the smiling Yao Lao, Xiao Yan suddenly felt a great danger.

“Get beat up! The more you get beat up, the better!” Yao Lao had a cold laugh while Xiao Yao had a stiff face...

Chapter 19: Cruel Training

In the morning, a pale mist had shrouded the surrounding summit and lingered for a very long time. A gentle wind blew by and suddenly a physical grunt could be heard.

Behind the summit, in a hidden groove, both of Xiao Yan's feet were inserted into the soil like tree stumps. His toes clung to the ground while he gnashed his teeth together and had cold sweat pour over his forehead. He only wore short pants and on his naked upper body were crisscrossed scars.

Behind Xiao Yan was Yao Lao in spirit mode, cross-legged above a giant stone. His face was solemnly as he gazed at Xiao Yan clenching his teeth to fight off the pain and then his palm softly swung upwards.

Following Yao Lao's palm, a red, materialized Dou Qi shot out from Yao Lao's palm. Just like a whip, it harshly smashed against Xiao Yan's shoulder, leaving behind a long bruise.

As the corners of his mouth violently trembled, Xiao Yan inhaled cold air through the slivers between his teeth in response to the pain. Xiao Yan's shoulder numbed and a wave of scorching pain make its way to his heart. Under the brutal pain, Xiao Yan felt his feet soften, and almost fell off balance...

Under the violent pain, the original weak Dou Qi within Xiao Yan became more animated than before and quickly flowed through the Qi paths and pressure points on Xiao Yan's shoulder. Strands of cool slowly seeped into into his bones and quietly strengthen in the progress.

“Again!” When the pain on his shoulder gradually faded away, Xiao Yan young face was filled with persistence and stubbornness and yelled while clenching his teeth.

Looking at persevering Xiao Yan, a gratified smile appeared on Yao Lao's withered face. Slightly nodded, a red materialized Dou Qi shot out from his palm again.

“Bang, Bang, Bang...” Within the small forest, as strike after strike hit Xiao Yan, low grunts along with naked hits sounded...

Every one of Yao Lao’s attacks were at the exact point of maximum endurance for Xiao Yan’s body. The attacks wouldn’t harm Xiao Yan seriously but still brought Xiao Yan the maximum pain possible.

The pain from the Dou Qi lashes caused an unbearable pain, forcing Xiao Yan young face to contort in agony.

On his body, with Yao Lao’s swings, more and more crisscrossed scars appeared...

“Bang!” another materialized Dou Qi shot out and the wood stake like Xiao Yan finally reached his limit. With weakened legs, he fell down paralyzed.

Fiercely gasped for air, Xiao Yan wiped away the cold sweat on his forehead and lifting his head up to make a rough smile, he asked: “Teacher, how was it?”

“Not bad, you took eighty four Dou Qi lashes today. That’s a lot better than when you started out half a month ago and only able to take nine lashes...” Yao Lao had a smile on his face and nodded. A glint of surprise flirted across his eyes, in the past half-month, the tenacity that Xiao Yan displayed was far beyond what was originally expected. For example, today, Yao Lao had originally thought that seventy Dou Qi lashes was Xiao Yan’s limit but the later had preserved to eighty-four lashes. Yao Lao could not help but admire the spirit of Xiao Yan.

After listening to Yao Lao words, Xiao Yan let out a deep breath and slumped on the ground. . When he regained feeling, he slowly crawled back up and wore the clothing on he had taken off and placed on a nearby rock.

When wearing the clothes, whenever the cool fabric touched against the bruises, Xiao Yan winced and gritted his teeth.

The transparent Yao Lao turned into a ray of light and disappeared within the black ring. Before disappearing, he left behind a phrase that he

had said countless times: “Quickly go back and submerge yourself within the Foundation Elixir to make sure that the congested blood doesn’t leave behind hidden wounds!”

Nodding, Xiao Yan finished putting on his clothes and left the forest.

....

Once Xiao Yan finally made it back to his room while enduring the pain, he quickly took off his clothes once again and jumped into his wooden bowl of green liquid...

TL: Bath Bowl – <http://www.inspirationgreen.com/wooden-bathtub.html>

The ice cold green liquid alleviated the pains from the bruised skin and Xiao Yan slowly closed his eyes, enjoying the soothing liquid flow over his skin.

After a while, Xiao Yan’s rushed breathing slowly calmed and even incorporated a couple snores! After a painful beating, Xiao Yan couldn’t take the fatigue on both his body and mental state and fell asleep....

While Xiao Yan was asleep, the green liquid rippled slightly and slivers of peaceful energy quietly slipped into Xiao Yan’s open pores. They washed away the lashes of congested blood and at the same time they revitalized and strengthened the muscles that were already at their utmost limit...

While sleeping, Xiao Yan’s body had been strengthened to a whole new level!

While strengthening and repairing Xiao Yan’s muscles, the green liquid slowly became lighter and lighter. Obviously, the energy in the liquid was decreasing.

Unaware of how long he had fallen asleep, Xiao Yan only knew that the warm sunlight had already brightened his room when he woke up.

Stretching out his body, his bones suddenly make rattling noises. When he lifted his head, he realized that his entire body was full of energy and power. Xiao Yan couldn’t help but yell out: “Great!”

As Xiao Yan stepped out from the wooden bowl, he unexpectedly discovered that the bowl of Foundation Elixir had already turned into transparent water from its originally green state.

"My elixir had already been used up?" Scratching his nose Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head. Suddenly recalling something, he happily closed his eye and carefully sensed his Dou Qi state.

A moment later, Xiao Yan opened his eye and happily laughed: "Finally, I'm at fifth Duan Qi!"

Chapter 20: Auction

To get to 4 Duan Qi in half a month and then 5 Duan Qi in another month and a half. This incredible speed was impossible even for the old Xiao Yan.

Even though at higher levels, raising one's Duan Qi becomes harder and harder, looking at the speed in which Xiao Yan is rising, it shouldn't be a problem for him to get to 7 Duan Qi by next year.

Of course, this is under the assumption that Xiao Yan has enough Foundation Elixir. Or else, Xiao Yan would definitely die under the severe beatings that he endures every day before getting to 7 Duan Qi. After all, without the Foundation Elixir, Xiao Yan's weak body wouldn't ever be able to withstand the harmful effects of having congested blood and he would die.

Therefore, what Xiao Yan needs to do right now is to buy more material for Foundation Elixir. Even though it sounds very easy, Xiao Yan has a slight problem.... He's broke.

Sitting on his bed, Xiao Yan has a bitter laugh. He had never thought that he would be in such an awkward situation because of money. While calculating... from last time, I still have 900 Gold Coins but with only so much money, buying the same grade material as last time is not going to happen.

Supporting his chin, Xiao Yan's eyes rolled quickly. Suddenly, he asked: "Teacher, for Purple Bluegrass of Bone Washing Flower, can we use younger stalks?"

"Sure, but then the effects would be much weaker and the Foundation Elixirs that I've been refining are tailored for you."

Blinking his eyes, Xiao Yan smiled: "No problem, let's use the worst grade material this time."

"The worst grade? Then the effects would be horrible and you'd need at least half a year to get to the next Duan Qi." Yao Lao's voice showed his

displeasure, he was probably furrowing his brows right now.

“Don’t have enough money? Go borrow from that girl again. With her background, even a couple ten thousand Gold Coins would be a small matter. Taking a step back, you can borrow from your dad, why must you lower the effectiveness of the Elixir and slow down your training speed...”

Hearing Yao Lao’s suggestion, Xiao Yan shook his head: “Just think of it as my self-respect stopping me from doing so. How can I keep on borrowing money from a girl? As for my dad, I’ve been avoiding him for two months now and if he wants to know why I want the money then wouldn’t I have to expose you?”

“Wait, teacher, this Foundation Elixir, can other people refine or make it?” Suddenly thinking of something, Xiao Yan’s brows jumped and he hurriedly asked.

“Hehe, brat, in the Dou Qi Mainland, there are countless herbs and within these herbs, you must find a combination that both calms the violent energy within Monster Cores and refine it so that one can absorb it. If you just randomly put herbs together than the Alchemy Furnace breaking would be the least of your troubles, the energy might backfire, hehe.... This Foundation Elixir was created after experimenting for a couple of years! Of course, there might be someone that also found out how to create it by luck but the chances of that happening is almost nonexistent.”

“In addition, while refining, you must make sure that the fuse rate, amount used and fire temperature is perfect. You need to do countless experiments and have an incredible soul perception to do that. Or else, why do you think that every Alchemist needs a teacher? To become a strong Alchemist is impossible without a teacher guiding you. Just the time you spend trying out the different combinations of herbs would cost you your whole life!”

“Therefore, I can’t include the entire Dou Qi Mainland but at least for Jia Ma Empire, no one else has made a Foundation Elixir like mine!” At this point, Yao Lao’s voice incorporated a hint of pride.

Surprised by the complexity in the seemingly simple Foundation Elixir, Xiao Yan instinctively licked his lips. When he looked at Yao Lao refining herbs, it all seemed so simple but now with Yao Lao's explanation, he realized that the art of Alchemy isn't as simple as what he had saw.

The Alchemy world is definitely huge and mysterious. No wonder an Alchemist is the most honorable profession in the entire Dou Qi Mainland.

But after his shock, Xiao Yan felt a tinge of glee: "Teacher, I'm not going to use the horrible Foundation Elixir to train. Instead, I wanted to sell it in an auction. Even though I don't have much right now, after the Foundation Elixir is sold then I'd have quite a bit and at that point buying high quality material for the Foundation Elixir would be super easy. Right?"

"I see... Sure. Alchemists selling their own pills isn't interesting news and the Foundation Elixir is at the lowest level of training medicine so selling it doesn't really matter." After thinking for a while, Yao Lao carelessly said.

Hearing Yao Lao's agreement, Xiao Yan quickly got what he needed and rushed out of his room.

Because Xiao Yan didn't need high quality herbs, he carelessly picked the youngest Purple Bluegrass and Bone Washing Flower in the pharmacy and as for the monster core, he brought the cheapest core he could find, the Green Wood Mouse Monster Core.

After buying all the medicine, Xiao Yan found a hidden alley and had Yao Lao refine the herbs into the Foundation Elixir.

The Foundation Elixir this time not only had a much worse effect than last time, it even had a different color. Going from a near transparent jade green to mottled ugly green...

After placing the pill that was the size of half of Xiao Yan's fist into a white Jade bottle that he had bought earlier, Xiao Yan finally let out a relaxed breath.

After hiding the jade bottle securely, Xiao Yan left the alley and ran

towards Wu Tan City's largest Auction.

Chapter 21: Second Tier Alchemist Gu Ni

Premier Auctions: Wu Tan City's largest auction house and a branch of Jia Ma empire's richest family, the Premier Family.

The Premier family was extremely ancient and had been a quite powerful force in Jia Ma Empire for a couple of centuries already. Their networks were definitely impressive and some rumors even claimed that the Premier family had close ties with Jia Ma Empire's royalty.

In the Empire, the Premier Family, Nalan Family, and Ritter Family are the three largest families and have various connections in the commercial and military world.

Therefore, with the Premier family supporting it, no matter how enticing the profits of the auction were, no one would dare to try anything against them.

Looking at the auction house at the end of the street, Xiao Yan turned into a side alley and quickly put on a black robe.

TL: Imagine a harry potter school robe

The black robe did not only cover up Xiao Yan's face, it also altered his skinny frame to seem a lot wider. Even if Xue Er was looking at the robed figure, she would not be able to realize it was Xiao Yan...

After being covered by a black robe, Xiao Yan let out a relieved breath. It wasn't that Xiao Yan was being too careful, but rather that the Foundation Elixir was too precious. For clans, the attraction of Foundation Elixirs was huge. If someone could mass produce it, then it would mean that the younger generation of the clan would grow at an accelerated rate, which would help the clan further their power and in turn lead to a positive cycle.

In order to avoid unnecessary trouble, Xiao Yan could only choose to hide himself....

Carefully touching the slightly cold White Jade bottle, Xiao Yan slowly walked out of the alley and went towards the auction house at the end of

the street.

Under the vigilant glances by the fully armored guards, Xiao Yan walked into the auction house without stopping.

As soon as Xiao Yan entered the house, the scorching feeling from the sun was replaced with a cool feeling. It made people feel as if they had stepped into a new world.

Sweeping through the fancy hall, Xiao Yan quickly found a side room. On the door which led to the room were the shiny words “Inspection Room”.

Walking inside, the room was quite empty and only a middle aged man who was obviously bored sat there. Hearing the door open, the man raised his head and, upon seeing the black robed Xiao Yan, his brow slightly furrowed. But immediately, the expression on his face changed to a professional smile: “Sir, do you plan on having something inspected?”

“Yes.” Under the black robe, a dry and old voice lightly floated out. It was Yao Lao’s voice!

Xiao Yan walked up and placed the White Jade bottle on the desk in front of the middle aged man.

“This is?” Looking confused, the middle aged man carefully picked up the White Jade bottle and sniffed it. The expression on his face immediately changed and when he looked back at the black robed figure, his gaze had a hint of respect: “Mister, you’re an Alchemist?”

“Yes.” The aged voice came out again.

“Could I ask, what... pill is within this bottle? What does it do?” Hearing that he was dealing with an alchemist, the middle aged man asked with even more respect.

“Foundation Elixir: It can increase Dou Qi training speed but only useful for people under the Dou Zhe level.”

“Oh? It can increase the Dou Qi training speed?” Hearing Yao Lao’s words, the expression on the middle aged man changed. Everyone knew

that Dou Qi could only be trained following a set formula and since the Qi Paths for individuals are especially weak at this point, if the effects of the medicine were too fierce, then the Qi Paths would burst and the person would die...

"My elixir doesn't have any side effects and the medicinal power is extremely peaceful so it won't cause something like that to happen. You don't need to worry about that happening." As if he could understand what the middle aged man was thinking, the wizened voice calmly explained.

His expression changing once more, the middle aged man carefully placed the White Jade bottle on the table in front of him and respectfully asked: "Mister, could you wait for a second? I need to ask our auction's Gu Ni master to inspect this Elixir!"

"Sure, hurry up." Waving his hand, Xiao Yan did not pretend to be polite and sat in a chair to the side.

The middle aged man quickly nodded and hurriedly left the room.

Sitting on the chair, Xiao Yao remained silent and didn't attempt to speak with Yao Lao. This was someone else's place and being cautious was better than not. Who knew if there were things that could listen in on their conversation.

After waiting in the room for a little while, the middle aged man returned with a green robed elder with slightly whitened hair.

On the chest of the elder were not gold stars but rather something like an alchemy furnace and on the alchemy furnace were two silver lines sparkling with elegance.

"Mister, this is our auction's Gu Ni Master. He's a three small Da Do Shi! At the same time, he's also a second tier Alchemist!" The middle aged man respectfully introduced the newcomer.

Hearing the identity of the elder, Xiao Yan's brow instinctively jumped. This was the first time that he met an alchemist beside Yao Lao. He carefully re-examined the elder.

The elder had a red face and even though the green robe seemed ordinary, there were slivers of light surging across it. Obviously, this robe had some kind of a Monster Core implanted into it. On the elder's commonplace face was an ever present arrogance, something that all Alchemists had.

While Xiao Yan was examining Gu Ni, Gu Ni was also studying the person in front of him. Alchemists weren't like Dou Zhes and Alchemists were highly sought after by various forces. Therefore, when Gu Ni was studying Xiao Yan, he was also trying to guess who the Alchemist was.

The middle aged man carefully picked up the Jade bottle on the table and passed it to Gu Ni...

Taking the White Jade bottle, Gu Ni first sniffed the sweet fragrance while his old eyes closed slightly. Lightly tipping the bottle, a drop of green liquid slowly rolled from the opening of the bottle to land in the middle of Gu Ni's palm.

Staring at the green liquid, Gu Ni whipped out a silver needle and on the tip of the needle showed a slight Dou Qi fluctuation. It quietly slipped into the green liquid and slowly stirred...

With the stirring of the needle, Gu Ni's calm face changed into a serious expression. Moments later, he placed the green liquid back into the jade bottle. When he looked at Xiao Yan again, his arrogant face had a hint of respect. Turning towards the middle aged man, he said: "The elixir is at second tier. Everything that was said before is true!"

Hearing that, the middle aged man let out a relieved breath and excitedly smiled at Xiao Yan: "Mister, do you plan on auctioning this Elixir?"

"Yup, can you auction it as soon as possible?"

"Hehe, that's no problem. Mister, take this and go to the first auction room. Luckily, we're having an auction there right now and your Elixir will be auctioned immediately!" The middle aged man smiled while handing over a pitch black metal card.

"Okay." Taking the metal card, Xiao Yan didn't wait and left the room

immediately.

“Gu Ni Master, is he really an Alchemist?” Only after Xiao Yan had left their sight did the middle aged man whispered quietly to Gu Ni.

“Yes, he’s an Alchemist. His agile Soul Perception, can’t be wrong...” Gu Ni nodded but his brow was furrowed and he muttered: “But where did he come from? I haven’t heard of any Alchemist that can refine a second tier pill in Wu Tan City.”

“Shall I do some research?”

Gu Ni paused before shaking his head: “Not now. All alchemists have weird tempers and if he notices you trying to dig up his history, he’ll have a bad impression of the auction. To be on the bad side of a mysterious Alchemist is never a smart move.”

Turning around, Gu Ni lightly said: “For him to have a good impression of our auction, you should know how to do that right?”

“Hehe, I understand.”

“Remember, even if we can’t become friends with him, we can’t offend him either. Or else...” Leaving behind a couple of cold words, Gu Ni also left the room.

Chapter 22: Hurricane Chant

Under the lead of an waitress, Xiao Yan entered the already started auction.

Entering the hall where the auction was being held, the originally bright environment darken while thunderous yells poured everywhere. It made Xiao Yan furrow his brows.

The auction was huge and the hall could definitely fit at least hundreds to even thousands of people. At this time, at the center of the hall, under a bright light, a red robed beauty was using her charming voice to describe the item in her hand.

Under the numbing and clear voice of the voice, the item that really wasn't worth much had it's price increase at an exponential rate.

Finding a remote seat, Xiao Yan quietly sat down and glanced at the beauty in the middle of the hall. With his acute observations, he realized that most of the people were here for her and not the items that were being auctioned.

Premier Auction House's top auctioneer: Ya Fei. She was an extremely famous beauty within Wu Tan City and her mature charm made many attracted to her.

Suddenly, the silent Xiao Yan turned around and stared at a man not too far away from him but hidden in a corner. His arms were swaying with words of Ya Fei's small red mouth and his hands disappeared beneath his waist...

"Damn!" Lightly cursing, Xiao Yan, who was under the robe, rolled his eyes: This guy is so shameless!

While cursing in his mind, Xiao Yan quickly moved away and bitterly smiled. His gaze once again went to the center of the hall and watched the charming curves of the auctioneer while muttering: "Yao Jing."

TL: Yao Jing is a derogatory(depends on context) term for beauties

After looking at the item in Ya Fei's hand, Xiao Yan lost his interest. He

didn't have that much money to buy a piece of junk, even if the seller of that item was a beautiful woman. After tearing his gaze away from Ya Fei, Xiao Yan started slowly looking around the hall.

"Huh... father?" His gaze stopping, Xiao Yan focused in on a middle-aged man sitting in the front row. Suddenly, his facial expression became one of shock: "Does father have an interest in that women?"

The odd thought didn't last long because Xiao Yan had discovered that his father's gaze wasn't focused on Ya Fei but rather was looking into the distance, as if he was waiting for something.

Why is father here? Pondering the question, Xiao Yan moved his gaze again. This time, he surprisingly realized that the clan leaders of the other two big clans, Jia Lie Clan and Ao Ba Clan were here!

Something's going to be auctioned that attracts all of them! His brow jumping, Xiao Yan curiously touched his nose. What could have attracted all three of the clan leaders to come here?

To be honest, the woman named Ya Fei was a expert at creating the atmosphere. Her glances and smiles would make the price of the item go up exponentially for a while. In addition, every time the price was raised, she would send a charming smile to the person who just called out the latest price and they would forget their pain of overpaying for the item.

The atmosphere within the auction house was kept at a climax with her smiles.

"Hehe, everyone, the auction house has just received a new auction item. I believe, that everyone would be interested in it." After auctioning the latest item, Ya Fei suddenly paused and said aloud towards the audience. With a wave of her hand, a waitress quickly brought up a jade plate and in the middle of the plate was a white jade bottle.

"This is a second tier pill." With her delicate hand picking up the jade bottle, Ya Fei's charming voice calmed the auctioneers for an instant. But soon, the yells became even louder, in Dou Qi Mainland, the pills refined by Alchemists were the most sought after items.

“This thing is named Foundation Elixir. It is only effective to those below the Dou Zhe level. Training in Foundation Elixir allows people under the Dou Zhe level to have an increased efficiency in training! Hehe, if you like your son or grandson to be called a genius, this is perfect for you!” Her attractive mouth lightly breathed the words and numbed the minds of many of the auctioneers.

“Foundation Elixir? It can raise one’s Dou Qi training speed? Lady Ya Fei, the people in that stage can’t take the pressure of the pill right?” Even though Ya Fei was extremely charming, there were also many people that stayed calm and after a brief silence, someone raised an essential question.

“Hehe, this elixir was personally inspected by our Gu Ni master and was found to be a second tier pill. There will not be a problem, everyone can be assured of that.” Ya Fei lightly laughed while responding.

Hearing that Gu Ni had personally inspected the pill, those with doubt didn’t question the validity of the pill anymore. Everyone knew that Gu Ni Master was a second tier Alchemist. in the entire Wu Tan City, even the clan leaders of the three clans were courteous towards him.

Xiao Yan lazily leaned on his chair and watched the excited atmosphere within the crowd. Letting out a light breath, he thought: Looks like this Foundation Elixir will bring quite a bit of income! Slightly shifting his gaze to his father, Xiao Yan realized that the previously calm expression on his father had slightly changed.

“8500!” Right when Ya Fei’s voice stopped, a person yelled out a price.

“9000!” Another price came right after the first price had been called.

The price quickly went up and within a couple of seconds, it got to 13,000!

Even though Xiao Yan’s father’s was somewhat excited, he didn’t call out a price immediately and instead closed his eyes, waiting for the small fry calls to stop.

The price went up again but soon, the voices died out. At that time, an

elder also sitting in the first row lightly said: “20,000!”

After calling out that price, the final voices in the auction died out. Some of the hopeful looked towards that emotionless elder but could only sit back down, disappointed. They didn’t have the wealth to be in a price war with the Jia Lie Clan.

“Hehe, Jia Lie Bi, didn’t your son already become a Dou Zhe? Why are you still thinking about this Foundation Elixir?” A middle aged man who was also sitting in the first row turned around to fakely smile at Jia Lie Bi.

“Ao Ba Pa, can’t I buy it for my future grandson?” Jia Lie Bi obviously didn’t like the middle aged man and coldly sneered at the latter.

Let’s see if your luck let’s you have a grandson, maybe some day your son finds himself without....After silently cursing at Jia Lie Bi, Ao Ba Pa also called out: “23,000!”

“25,000!”

.....

Within 10 minutes and under the surprised stares of everyone within the auction, the two were like dogs fighting over a meal and raised the price to 31,000!

“40,000!” The closed eyed Xiao Zhan suddenly spoke up.

Everyone within the auction hall went silent and switched their stares to Xiao Zhan. Even Ao Ba Pa and Jia Lie Bi were stunned by the sudden raise in the price.

“Hehe, Clan leader Xiao, looks like you really want this Foundation Elixir.” Jia Lie Bi smiled.

Xiao Zhan glanced at him and said: “If you want it, then just raise the price. I promise I won’t raise the price again.”

Jia Lie Bi paused and thought about the truth within Xiao Zhan’s words. Soon, he shook his head since his purpose here today wasn’t for the Foundation Elixir and to waste money that could have gone to that item was not a smart idea.

Ao Ba Pa on the other side, seeing that Jia Lie Bi stopped raising the price, also shrugged his shoulders. Even though the Foundation Elixir was extremely tempting, his goal wasn't that. Therefore, he also stopped raising the price.

"Clan leader Xiao Zhan has bid 40,000 Gold Coins, is there anyone that wishes to raise the price?" Seeing the calm hall, Ya Fei smiled while reminding the crowd.

"Since no one has raised the price, this Foundation Elixir will go to clan leader Xiao Zhan!" Seeing that no one responded, Ya Fei was smart and lightly tapped her small hammer on the table, signalling that the Foundation Elixir had found its new owner.

In a remote area, Xiao Yan didn't know whether to laugh or cry. After so much, he had received the money off of his father.

"Hehe, next, we'll be auctioning the final auction item!" Placing the jade bottle back within the plate, Ya Fei waved her hand and the light in the hall dimmed. Bending down, she took out a silver plate and in the middle of the plate was a green, unadorned scroll.

The scroll was slightly glowing green and with the reflections off of the silver plate, it was cast in a mysterious light.

"High Xuan Level Qi Method: Hurricane Chant!"

Chapter 23: The Scramble

The moment Ya Fei said High Level Xuan Qi Method, the entire auction went silent.

Compared to the Foundation Elixir, Dou Qi Methods were infinitely more valuable.

Even though pills were expensive, they were a one-time use item. But Qi Methods would last for one's entire life and can even be inherited by one's sons and grandsons. So from a long term standpoint, a high level Qi Method was much more sought after compared to pills.

After all, once a person has a high level Qi Method, even without the support of pills, that person can become a force to be reckoned with after a period of time. On the other hand, if one doesn't have a Qi Method and only has pills, then even if that person is eating pills like they are candy, he still would not become too strong.

After a brief moment of shock, the auctioneers recovered and sent their burning gazes at the green scroll at the middle of the hall. Even the charming Ya Fei seemed to have been forgotten...

Sitting in the back row, Xiao Yan let out a breath. High Xuan Level Qi Method? No wonder... The Qi Method is an entire tier higher than Xiao Clan's top Qi Method, Furious Lion's Rage. No wonder that the three clan leaders in Wu Tan City came here in person. So they were all gunning for this...

"A High Xuan Level..." Watching the motionless green scroll, Xiao Yan instinctively licked his lips. To own that scroll would basically mean that they have a pass to become a top Dou Zhe and after a few decades, there would be a new force that would rival the three clans in Wu Tan City.

"It's only a High Xuan Level Qi Method, what's so special about that." Right when Xiao Yan was fantasizing about the Qi Method, Yao Lao's voice awkwardly sounded within Xiao Yan.

"Only..." Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan felt that there was a huge gap

between him and the old geezer that would claim top tier Qi Methods were trash. He could only purse his lips and remain silent.

“Brat, just keep on training. The day that you become a Dou Zhe, I’ll let you see what a high tier Qi Method is!” After Yao Lao finished his thought, he became silent again.

Pursing his lips again, Xiao Yan muttered: “I hope so.”

.....

“Everyone, this Xuan Level Qi Method was found by a hunter in the mountains. It must have been left behind by an ancestor so it won’t bring anyone any trouble after they buy it. Everyone can bid without fearing that there may be consequences.” Ya Fei carefully held up the green scroll and lightly said.

“Lady Ya Fei, can you set the bottom price already!” One of the auctioneers impatiently yelled out.

Keeping her charming smile, Ya Fei said: “Hurricane Chant, bottom price, 200,000 Gold Coins!”

After she called out the bottom price, the auction house became visibly quieter. Obviously, a lot of the auctioneers didn’t have the wealth to buy such an expensive item.

In a remote region, Xiao Yan couldn’t help but shake his head. This woman kills people without spilling blood! 200,000 Gold Coins is equal to the profits of Xiao Clan for an entire two years!

TL: Killing people without spilling blood means to indirectly “kill” someone, something like I leave a huge cliffhanger at the end of this chapter :P Of course that won’t happen

Xiao Zhan and the other two clan leaders visibly shivered. But they could do nothing about the price, for something as valuable as this; they would be willing to pay such a high price to obtain it. Even if they didn’t want to buy it, someone else would.

Under the 200,000 price, no one bid at all.

Facing the awkward atmosphere, Ya Fei kept her charming smile. She knew that the attraction of this Qi Method was so huge that people would be willing to use their entire fortune to buy it.

Just like her prediction, the lack of bids didn't last for long. A nearly bald middle aged man shakily yelled out: "210,000!"

Xiao Yan looked towards the voice; he knew this bald middle aged man. The bald man was the owner of a weapon shop that nearly monopolized the entire weapons market in Wu Tan City. Even though he couldn't compare to the three clan leaders, he was still quite powerful.

"230,000!" Right after the weapon shop owner yelled out his price, a yellow robed elder also called out his price.

The yellow robed elder was a huge medicine merchant that owned quite a few shops in Wu Tan City. Like the middle aged man, he couldn't compare to the three clan leaders but nevertheless, he was quite powerful.

Giving an evil eye to the elder, the bald middle aged man yelled out again: "240,000!"

Within the auction house, there were only a few bids. After all, the 200,000 price was enough to bar the majority of auctioneers from bidding.

"300,000!" Right when the previous two were about to quit bidding, Jia Lie Bi in the first row finally called out his bid.

After Jia Lie Bi called out his bid, the two helplessly back down.

"330,000!" In Wu Tan City, the only people that could rival Jia Lie Clan were Xiao Clan and Ao Ba Clan. This price was called out by Ao Ba Clan's clan leader, Ao Ba Pa.

Coldly glancing at Ao Ba Pa, Jia Lie Bi coldly said: "350,000!"

Ao Ba Pa forced out: "370,000!"

"380,000!"

"400,000!"

Under Ao Ba Pa's continuous raises, Jia Lie Bi followed without hesitation. It seems like he was prepared to get the scroll at any cost.

When the price got to 430,000, Ao Ba Pa had to stop bidding. 430,000 was enough to force the powerful Ao Ba Clan into a financial crisis.

"450,000!" Seeing Ao Ba Pa back down, Jia Lie Bi didn't have a chance to celebrate before Xiao Zhan's bid his price.

Coldly staring at Xiao Zhan, Jia Lie Bi was full of rage. In the three clans, Xiao Clan and Ao Ba Clan had Middle Xuan Level Qi Methods but Jia Lie Clan only had a Low Xuan Level Qi Method which is why Jia Lie Bi was willing to pay any price to get this High Xuan Qi Method.

Under the gleeful look of Ao Ba Pa, Jia Lie Bi clenched his teeth and spit out: "460,000!"

"500,000!" The impassive Xiao Zhan raised the price to a whole new level!

At the center of the auction hall, watching the two fight over the bids, Ya Fei's beautiful smile became even more charming.

"550,000!" His eyes red, Jia Lie Bi finally decided to raise the price again after a brief pause.

"You've won." Contrary to everyone's predictions, after Xiao Zhan heard Jia Lie Bi's bid, Xiao Zhan only smiled and taunted Jia Lie Bi.

The surprise in Jia Lie Bi's expression was quickly replaced with a dark face. The rational side of him knew that he had been played...

"Xiao Zhan, you win! I'll remember this!" After cursing at Xiao Zhan, Jia Lie Bi raised his head to look at the stunned Ya Fei. Even though he was extremely angry, he wasn't one to be dictated by his emotions and with a dark face suppressed his emotions: "Lady Ya Fei, should the auction end?"

Not changing expressions because of Jia Lie Bi's angry stare, Ya Fei calmly smiled. Her eyes contained a hint of ridicule and under the tense stare of Jia Lie Bi lightly tapped the hammer in her hand.

"Hurricane Chant, won by Jia Lie Clan Leader!"

Seeing the final moments of the auction, Xiao Yan smiled and slowly got up, leaving the auction house.

“Hahh, once I get the money, I’ll start training. One year later, I need to give father a surprise.” When he was at the door steps of the auction house, Xiao Yan lightly muttered.

Chapter 24: Everything For Later

Leaving the first auction hall, Xiao Yan returned to the Inspection Room and under the respectful gaze of the middle aged man, patiently waited.

A few minutes later, with a flurry of footsteps, two shadows pushed the door open.

“Hehe, are you the owner of the Foundation Elixir? Mister, this must be the first time you’ve come to Wu Tan City right?” With a gust of perfume, a charming yet numbing giggle sounded besides Xiao Yan. It made his firm mindset waver.

After cursing “Yao Jing”, Xiao Yan furrowed his face further within the robe before turning around to look at the red-dressed woman besides him.

With close contact, Xiao Yan once again realized the charm within Ya Fei. On the dazzling face was a pair of watery eyes with long eyelashes that seemed to always send out strands of binding ropes to men. Looking down, past the graceful white neck, Xiao Yan was almost sucked into her cleavage. Her natural charm even influenced the calm Xiao Yan...

Although Xiao Yan had a red face, thankfully, it was covered by his robe. Calming himself, Xiao Yao slightly nodded and at the same time, Yao Lao’s voice also floated out: “The auction was successful? Give me the money, I have something to do!”

As if she was intrigued by the age of the owner of the black robe, Ya Fei covered her mouth as she laughed. After a while, she recovered: “Please excuse us for a little while longer. We’re still working on the paperwork.”

Slightly nodding, Xiao Yan didn’t open his mouth again and moved his sight from Ya Fei while keeping silent.

Looking at the mysterious person covered in the black robe, Ya Fei’s brows furrowed. Looks like her prideful beauty had no effect. Pursing her lips, her gaze swept over the mysterious person, trying to discern every single detail in order to find out who she was dealing with.

After sweeping through Xiao Yan and not getting any information, Ya

Fei disappointedly looked at Gu Ni. After their eyes met, she bit her lips and asked: "Mister, Ya Fei has rarely seen an alchemist that doesn't have the alchemist badge, could I ask for your name?"

"Huh? Girl, coming to this place means that I need to say who I am?" Under the black robe, Yao Lao's voice coldly spoke up.

"Hehe, Ya Fei was only curious. If mister doesn't want to say it, Ya Fei wouldn't force you." Ya Fei lightly laughed.

Through the black robe, Xiao Yan watched the white legs wrapped in a red dress besides. Even though he couldn't help but admire her beauty, he silently reminded himself that for Ya Fei to become the top auctioneer, she wasn't some flower pot. Everyone said that beauty was trouble, after all, in the entire Wu Tan City, there were countless suitors but even to this day, none of them achieved their goal. Even though many of them blamed the Primer Auction House behind her, none of them would claim that she was a pretty flowerpot.

With such a clever woman besides him, Xiao Yan was as careful as if he was walking ontop ice. He was afraid that Ya Fei would discover something from him but thankfully, with Yao Lao talking, the mysterious geezer wouldn't be charmed by the "Yao Jing" besides him.

From Yao Lao's impassive words, Ya Fei wasn't able to find any information. In the end, she gave up on trying to find new information and instead smiled while taking out a crystal card. On the card was the Primer Family Logd: "Mister, this is the Primer Auction House's VIP card. With this card, you can receive VIP treatment at any Primer Family Auction House. At the same time, the taxes that the Auctions take would go from 5% to 2%/"

Hearing that, Xiao Yan's brows jumped. Compared to the blabber before, he liked this kind of solid benefits, so after pausing for a while, he took the crystal card.

Seeing the long and pale hand out of the back robe, a glint of confusion flashed across Ya Fei's eyes. The voice from the person under the black robe was obviously the voice of an old man but he has a hand that looks

like a young man. This person, who is he?

At this time, a waitress ran in and courteously handed a green card to Ya Fei.

"Mister, the Foundation Elixir sold for 40,000 Gold Coins and taking out 2% as auction fees, the rest is in here." Ya Fei smiled while handing the green card over.

Taking the green card, Xiao Yan's tense heart fell. The funds for his training was inside that tiny green card. 40,000 Gold Coins, that would be enough to train to a Dou Zhe....

Since he already got the money, Xiao Yan didn't have any more reason to stay and after carelessly pushing his hands together, a wizened voice calmly said: "I can leave now right?"

"Hehe, of course. If you would like to auction off any more pills, please keep the Primer Auction House in mind." Ya Fei smiled.

"Mm." Carelessly responding, Xiao Yan stood up and left the tense room.

Watching the disappearing shadow of Xiao Yan, the smile on Ya Fei's face slowly disappeared and she plopped down into a nearby chair.

"Gu Ni shu-shu, is he really an Alchemist?" After an awkward silence, Ya Fei broke the stillness.

"Yeah, and his Alchemy skills are better than mine. That second tier Foundation Elixir, I can't refine it." Gu Ni answered while sighing.

"Even with the formula?" Slightly wincing, Ya Fei's red mouth carelessly let out a dangerous sentence.

Hearing Ya Fei's words, Gu Ni's face changed and he hurriedly said: "A formula is an alchemist's life. Please don't think that again. To careless anger a mysterious alchemist, even for the Primer family, is a huge deal. A couple dozen years ago, the famous Cech family of Jia Ma Empire enraged Pill King Gu He and was annihilated by 4 Dou Wangs that Gu He sent. Even the Jia Ma Empire's royalty wouldn't control the matter!"

"Even though our family is much stronger than the Cech family, it's best

not to offend some mysterious alchemist. Alchemists are like a hornet's nest, once you poke it, he'll find countless friends and many experts would love to have an Alchemist owe them a favor."

Watching the panicking Gu Ni, Ya Fei bitterly smiled while massaging her forehead: "Gu Ni Shu Shu, what are you saying. I wasn't thinking any of that, do you think that Ya Fei has wasted these few years?"

"I was reminding you." Hearing Ya Fei's words, Gu Ni let out a breath. He was really afraid that she would do something stupid.

Pursing her lips, Ya Fei propped up her check while sighing. Alchemists, they really are some dangerous people but why don't I have such a talent?

Chapter 25: I'll Pay for It

After he sneaked back into his room, Xiao Yan quickly closed the door and went to the corner of the room, before finally taking out a bunch of medical herbs and magic crystals. He carefully placed them in the cabinet and deeply sniffed the smell of herbs as he smiled with relief.

To be to practice uninterrupted, Xiao Yan had purchased the amount of herbs needed for 8 months of usage, allowing him to practice non-stop for the rest of the year.

As he affectionately patted the cabinet, his lips cracked open and he lazily goes on the side of his bed, putting his head down. Today's activities had made him really tired "Yan Er, are you there?" A mumbled voice and a knock pass through his door..

Opening his blurry eyes, Xiao Yan hurriedly jumped out of his bed, then opened his room's door, looking at Xiao Zhao outside of the door and asked: "Father, do you need something?"

"Can't I see for you even if I don't need anything from you? You kid, you hid from me for 2 months." Xiao Zhan reprimanded as he rubbed Xiao Yan's head affectionately.

Looking at Xiao Zhan's warm smiling face, Xiao Yan's was moved as he pumped his sore nose, not knowing what to say.

"Are you still feeling responsible for that ? Haha, if she can't take a liking to my son, it is her loss. You don't have to be sad. Why should a great man act like a little kid? I know that this son of Xiao Zhan, is not a cripple." Xiao Zhan boldly said.

"Haha father, after 3 years, Yan Er will go to the Faction of Misty Clouds personally." Xiao Yan said in a soft voice with a smile.

Xiao Zhao's smiling face became more serious, as he stared at Xiao Yan. After a while, he said with some hesitation: "Father feels fine, but... are you really going to? Father isn't saying that you can't reach Nalan Yanran, but the strength of the Faction of Misty Clouds..."

Xiao Yan smiled as he nodded, his thin lips forcing a somewhat stubborn line: "Father, that there are some things, that as a man, I have to bear."

"Aha, this temper of yours resembles mine much, if your two big brothers knew that you thought like this, they would probably be very happy", Towards Xiao Yan's dedication, Xiao Zhan smiled pleased before sighing and nodded heavily: "Good, father waits for his son to give him some face, I want the old bastard Nalan Shu to beg me to remake that marriage promise."

Xiao Yan nodded and couldn't help but laugh.

"Hey, I'll give you this, consider it as your father's support." He handed to Xiao Yan a very familiar white bottle.

Looking at this elixir that went back to his own hands, Xian Yan didn't know whether to laugh or cry. But on his face, he maintained a puzzled expression : "Father, this is?"

"Foundation Elixir, it'll accelerate your Dou Qi cultivation, I just bought it today." Xiao Zhan's mouth smiled.

"You must have spent a lot of money for this right?" As he received the white jade bottle, Xiao Yan's heart felt warm.

"40 000 gold coins, but if it can be of use to you, it is worth its price " Xiao Zhan smiled as though he didn't care.

"You spent 40 000 gold coins for buying me this foundation spirit elixir? Won't the elders perhaps cause trouble to you using this excuse?" Xiao Yan smiled bitterly.

"Tssk, I am the Clan Leader, they can at most utter some words" Xiao Zhan said coldly.

"Father, thank you, during the adult ceremony in one year, I will make them shut their mouth completely". Xiao Yan calmly laughed as he said that.

"Good, I am waiting for my son to transform once more !" Although he didn't know from where Xiao Yan's confidence came from, Xiao Zhan was

very happy seeing his son's confident appearance.

"Alright, I won't disturb your rest. If there are any problems come and see your father, as a family member, I cannot let you be disgraced."

Waving his hand, Xiao Zhan turned around, as he took big strides leaving the front yard.

"Shit, I also have to face these old fools now. I only spent 40 000 Gold Coins, but they will act like I had spent the money that was supposed to be used for buying their coffins." From the night, Xiao Zhan's mutters floated to Xiao Yan.

Looking at his father vanish into the darkness, Xiao Yan touched his nose and smiled while saying in a low voice: "Relax, father, I will use reality to make these people quiet. 3 years before, I could make them look up at me, 3 years after, I will still be able to!"

After standing at his door for a while, Xiao Yan put away the white jade bottle. Then, he shot a look at the corner of the room, teasing: "Girl ! Is it fun to eavesdrop on people?"

"Xiao Yan ge-ge, that was keen from you....." From the corner, a pretty young girl wearing a purple skirt came out elegantly. Leaning her little head, a big smile was revealed on her beautiful face.

Looking at the mischievous girl's face, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head.

"Where did Xiao Yan ge-ge go this afternoon?" Xun Er came forward, walked up lightly and asked with a smile.

"I was just on a little stroll."

"Is that so?" Her eyes looking up and down, Xun Er suddenly took a step forward and bent slightly. Her nose wrinkled while she said: "I smell the fragrance of a woman."

"Cough, come on, why would I have a woman's fragrance." Xiao Yan's immature face suddenly blushed, but in the dark, his as well as the girl's face couldn't be seen clearly.

"Hee hee." Seemingly liking this predicament Xiao Yan was in, Xun Er laughed and a moment later, stopped laughing. Before quietly saying : "A moment ago, I also heard Xiao shu-shu's words, I believe that Xiao Yan ge-ge, yup..... In the future, you really want to go to the Faction of the Misty Clouds, Xun Er will come with you, to help you....."

Hearing this, Xiao Yan blinked and tightly stared at the young girl's beautiful small face.

Under Xiao Yan's unrestrained vision, Xun Er's her face flushed a little from shyness as she whispered :"Xiao Yan ge-ge, what are you looking at....."

"Hehe, Xun Er can also blush, such a rare sight." Xiao Yan unexpectedly said with a smile.

Xun Er coldly glanced at Xiao Yan and she muttered under her breath: "And you can also glance at people this way."

"Good, good, have confidence in ge-ge, although the Faction of Misty Clouds is formidable, I am still young. This Yun Yun who spoils that girl Nalan Yanran, definitely isn't too great of a teacher." Xiao Yan smiled as he rubbed the black hair of the young girl. "Well, it is late, head back for a rest."

Looking at Xiao Yan waving, Xun Er shakes her head reluctantly. And went into the darkness under his sight.

After turning a corner, sounds could be heard from a quarrel between Xiao Zhan and the several elders. The topic of the quarrel: how the 40 000 gold coins were used.

Stopping, Xun Er's little eyebrows wrinkled and she lets out a small sigh while a purple card appeared between her slim fingers.

Her fingertips flicking the purple colored gold-card, making the purple-gold card flash into golden light as it soared towards the room where the elders are quarrelling with Xiao Zhan.

The room suddenly became silent while Xun Er faintly said: "This is the money for the Foundation Elixir. In this card there are 100,000 gold coins,

now that I've given you this, I hope that you elders won't continue to give uncle Xiao trouble."

The room was completely silent before the "yeses" from the three elders came through.

Chapter 26: Intensive training

“Octane Blast!”

In the forest, a crisp roar rung out.

An agile shadow was jumping flexibly in these woods and even though the forest was densely covered with thorns, they didn’t obstruct him at all.

In the next instant, the shadow unexpectedly stopped before a 0.5 meter large tree, and with the body half slanted, an elbow slammed against the tree.

“Bang !” A noise rang as wood splinters scattered. Spidery cracks appeared on the point of impact and spread throughout the whole tree.

“Crunch.....” The tree had a huge gaping hole with the elbow hit and emitted a crunching sound before loudly falling to the ground a moment later.

The moment the big tree fell, the agile shadow quickly took a few steps back vigorously like a monkey and lightly floated to a green colored stone.

Looking at the results of his efforts, Xiao Yan’s delicate small face showed a smile. In the past three months, this was the first time he had succeeded in using the Octane Blast, a high Xuan level skill. This Octane Blast that could rival a Di Dou Technique didn’t let Xiao Yan down; with Xiao Yan’s 6 Duan Qi, he could rival the destruction of a person at 8 Duan Qi!

.....

The more one’s Duan Qi level rises, the harder it is for one to raise their Duan Qi. But since the auction, Xiao Yan went into intensive training for 3 months and only a few days before did his Duan Qi jump from 5 Duan Qi to 6 Duan Qi.

To gain one Duan Qi in 3 months, although this speed is slower compared to the two months needed for reaching 5 Duan Qi, Xiao Yan was still very satisfied. When he was training before, it took him an entire half year to go from 5 Duan Qi to 6 Duan Qi. The current speed is

terrifying

.....

After having used Octane Blast, Xiao Yan's whole body was like a sponge which was suddenly squeezed of its water. A noticeable pain was constantly corroding his nerves while the veins on his arms were visibly pulsing. These were the signs of extreme exhaustion...

Licking his lips, Xiao Yan struggled to turn his head to look at his right elbow. What entered his vision was a crimson elbow.....

"Tss...." A corner of his mouth cracked open while Xiao Yan inhaled a deep breath and said with a bitter smile: "No wonder I had to bear such harsh beatings. Or else what this strike would have broken wouldn't have been the tree, but my arm. This Octane Blast skill is pretty much a comparison of who has the harder body."

His whole body lying on the ice-cold stone, Xiao Yan rapid breathing slowly calmed down. However, the aching sensations of Xiao Yan's body made him not want to move even his finger yet.

With Xiao Yan's 6 Duan Qi, he could at most use the Octane Blast once and after using it, he would be completely depleted of his strength until much later.

Xiao Yan threw back his head, narrowed his eyes and lazily looked at the floating clouds in the blue sky. A slight breeze brushes by, blowing a wisp of his black hair to flap against his forehead.

Seeping through his body as Xiao Yan rested were the Foundation Elixirs that he had absorbed for the path months, and now they were at work, repairing his muscle tissue and cells at maximum speed, bringing new energy to Xiao Yan.

"Teacher, how long do I need to keep practicing before I can attain 7 Duan Qi?" While his eyes were shut, Xiao Yan suddenly whispered.

His goal was to attain 7th rank and thus acquiring the qualification to enter the Xiao Clan's Dou Qi Hall where he could find Qi Methods to practice. Even though, at this point, those Qi Methods are at a far too low

level for him, he must acquire these qualifications because it related to the face of his father.

A cold breeze blew by as Yao Lao's transparent body appeared besides the enormous stone.

With a happy expression in his face as he looked at his junior, Yao Lao first took note of the big tree. Then he nodded as he said with a smile: "Your training speed is beyond my expectations. Originally I believed that even with the help of the elixir, you would need a year before entering 7 Duan Qi.... or is it because you were suppressed far too hard before bouncing back now. Looking at this progress, within 2 months, you can certainly enter the 7th Dou Qi rank.

Hearing this, Xiao Yan's lips lifted up, making a turn of a faint smile. He really wanted to know, after these 3 years during which he has been unceasingly taunted by his clan members, when they will see his strength, what kind of expression will they show? That day, when he was talking to Nalan Yanran in the main hall, didn't those words apply to them also? /

"I, Xiao Yan, could create a miracle 3 years ago, and three years later, I can still do it!" His vision glittered a little as Xiao Yan thought about half a year before, how he was taunted in the main hall. But even though his silhouette was lonely it unbending and persistent.

Nalan Yanran, I am catching up to you step by step, wait for me! We shall meet in Faction of Misty Clouds in three year!

The corner of his mouth suddenly frowning a little, the youth jumped as he raised his head to roar at the distant sky.

Watching at his junior roaring, Yao Lao showed a smile and didn't stop him: people need pressure to mature. The current Xiao Yan, has enough talent but what he needs is pressure to push him! Nalan Yanran's decision was the best pressure possible.

"Let her be your stepping stone. In the road to become respected, you still have a big distance left to finish!"

"Go, let's head back for practicing!"

Roaring several times, the smile on Xian Yao's face grew bigger. Soon he jumped off the boulder and waved at Yao Lao before beginning his descent from the mountain, still smiling.

Chapter 27: Rushing 7 Duan Qi

Time was like water, slipping through one's finger quickly and mysteriously.

The scorching summer had been replaced with the cool fall and the light green branches had already showed hints of yellow.

The room was still neat and sunlight would still scatter through the windows.

There was a wood basin in the room where a young man was training. He had both of his eyes closed and both hands folded.

The training for the majority of the year had forced a hint of stubbornness to appear on the young man's delicate and smooth face. His tight lips showed how determined he was and his original white skin that was as white as a woman's had become slightly yellow with the beatings in the past months. His small physique didn't seem too muscular but had the burst potential like a jaguar.

Looking from every angle, the young man was transforming at a terrifying speed and when this transformation was done, he would shock everyone!

Under the smooth breathing of the young man, strands of green airflow slowly lifted from the wood basin and followed the young man's breath into his body.

"I will get to 7 Duan Qi today!"

When he was training, Xiao Yan suddenly had the thought pop into his head. Even though there was no proof to back the thought up, it felt as if it was the word of god, the truth.

In the previous month, Xiao Yan had attempted to get to 7 Duan Qi quite a few times but every time failure would greet him.

Maybe it was because today's training was basically the last drop to a full cup but finally, Xiao Yan knew that he would get to 7 Duan Qi.

The sudden thought made Xiao Yan almost break his folded hands apart and exit from training. Thankfully, Xiao Yan was able to suppress the thought and take an effort to calm down.

As his breath calmed, Xiao Yan started to greedily absorb energy to break through 7 Duan Qi.

In the wooden basin, the green elixir started emitting seven colored sparkles as countless strands evaporated and rushed into Xiao Yan's body.

As the green airflows increased in number, they not covered Xiao Yan's body but also hid the wooden basin within a layer of green mist.

Under Xiao Yan's absorption of the energy, the green liquid within the basin was paling considerably.

Because of the huge amount of energy that he absorbed, Xiao Yan's small face began to flush red but also glow hints of green.

Xiao Yan who was rushing 7 Duan Qi had undoubtedly become a huge magnet, not only sucking energy from the surrounding air but also creating mini whirlpools within the wood basin.

In the first 9 Duan Qis, 1 to 3 Duan Qi were considered low level, 4 to 6 Duan Qi were middle level and 7 to 9 Duan Qi were high leveled.

The 7th Duan Qi was basically a gap between Duan Qis, once one gets to 7 Duan Qi then they would have gotten to the high leveled Duan Qi and have a couple times as much Dou Qi compared to 6 Duan Qi. Therefore, 7 Duan Qi was considered as the first lock to becoming a Dou Zhe.

With the green whirlpools, the green liquid within the basin became lighter and lighter in color before changing to a bowl of clear water.

Without the energy from the Foundation Elixir, the green aura around Xiao Yan's face slackened and he could only absorb the energy in the air to complete his 7 Duan Qi.

Even though it was possible to use the energy in the air to break through 7 Duan Qi but it would take much longer and even if he does get to 7 Duan Qi, he would need an entire month before he would find himself

truly at the level of 7 Duan Qi.

But what Xiao Yan was missing the most, was time!

When the Foundation Elixir finally gave out, Xiao Yan's black ring flickered and a jade green Foundation Elixir droplet fell into the basin. Suddenly, the clear water turned back into a shade of dark green.

With the fresh Foundation Elixir's energy, Xiao Yan silently thanked Yao Lao and while keeping his hands folded, controlled his breathing to crazily absorb the new energy.

After crazily absorbing energy for an entire hour, Xiao Yan finally slowed down and at this point, the dark green water had paled by a few shades!

Taking in the final strand of energy, Xiao Yan body, after a brief pause, started shaking violently. His stomach pushed in while his eyes suddenly opened. Within the black pupils were hints of white and green. Finally, opening his mouth, Xiao Yan let out a breath of stale air...

After the stale breath left Xiao Yan, he finally straightened.

With his eyes blankly staring forward, Xiao Yan turned his neck to meet crisp bone cracking sounds. Then he curled his hand to feel a solid strength that brought a smile to Xiao Yan's lips.

"Finally, 7 Duan Qi..."

Closing his eyes, Xiao Yan started to explore the abundant Dou Qi within his body....

Chapter 28: Strengthening “Vacuum Hand”

Xiao Yan lay in the wooden basin, his body submerged in cool Foundation Elixir, absorbed in the feeling of firm strength that he has just acquired. Normal methods of getting to 7 Duan Qi required a period of rest and recovery. However, Xiao Yan did not need it since he had the Foundation Elixir. He was already in peak condition.

After laying there for a while, waiting for his excitement to calm down, Xiao Yan lazily picked himself up and stretched. The joints in his new body cracked while The water droplets that clung to him sparkled like gems under the sunshine.

After lying in the basin for a while, until his excited emotions calmed, Xiao Yan finally lazily got up. The attached water droplets sparkled joyously under the bright sunshine.

Taking a lazy stretch, Xiao Yan’s bones gave crisps cracks as if they were brand new!

Carelessly turning his head, Xiao Yan’s right hand locked onto his bed and pulled his clothes into his hand.

“Nice. My Dou Qi increased by quite a bit. I should be able to influence someone’s actions now, right?” Xiao Yan muttered as he dressed himself.

“Unfortunately, this ‘Vacuum Hand’ doesn’t have any power when attacking. ‘Sucking Blood from One’s Enemy’ applies only to people with weaker Dou Qi than me. For anyone with greater Dou Qi than me, it’d be among the worst to use.”

Contemplating the negative effects of “Vacuum Hand”, Xiao Yan sighed in disappointment. However, even if the technique was terrible, it was the first Dou Technique that he had ever owned!

Just as he was about to step out of the basin, a thought came to him. He pursed his lips.

Eyes gleaming, Xiao Yan slowly curled his right hand into a fist and raised his arm so that his hand was about half a foot away from a flower vase. He stared intently at his hand, and deliberately avoided looking at his target.

Xiao Yan’s Dou Qi burst from his palm without the guidance of Q

Licking his lips, Xiao Yan’s Dou Qi burst out of his palm without any planned Qi Pathes or pressure points....

To be able to externalize Dou QI without the use of Qi Paths was something the Da Dou Shi could barely do. Xiao Yan’s attempt resulted in nothing more than a moderate gust of wind.

The air flowed from his palm and connected with the vase, almost knocking it off the table.

Even though he failed to externalize the Dou Qi, Xiao Yan’s face bore an expression of elation. He excitedly rubbed his hands together and quickly took a few steps back before raising his hand at the vase again.

“Vacuum Hand!”

“Vacuum Hand!” A small roar and a huge pulling force forced the flower vase to spiral towards Xiao Yan.

Just as the vase was roughly three feet away, the pulling force

Right when the vase was about 3 feet away from Xiao Yan, the pulling force on Xiao Yan’s hand disappeared and was replaced by Dou Qi rapidly trying to externalize on his palm. Suddenly, a huge gust of wind blew against the approaching vase!

“Peng!”

The two counteracting forces met in mid air and the vase that was in the middle of the clash suddenly broke into countless ceramic pieces.

TL: Man Xiao Yan hates vases

Seeing the results of his experimentation, Xiao Yan’s small face was full of happy surprise. The combination of the pulling and pushing force caused a destruction far greater than he had imagined.

Even though Xiao Yan’s plentiful Dou Qi had almost been exhausted by that experiment, Xiao Yan was still extremely exciting. The pushing force was caused through a low leveled method which had a great consumption of Dou Qi with barely mediocre results. If he had a Dou Technique that was the opposite of Vacuum Hand, then the two combined, he was sure, would have a great effect!

“Brat, pretty good...To have thought up this method to strengthen Vacuum Hand.” The black ring sparkling, Yao Lao ghostly floated out and praised Xiao Yan while inspecting the ceramic fragments.

Xiao Yan smiled and his eyes quickly circled around Yao Lao. On Xiao Yan’s face was an expression of sadness and fawning.

“If there was a Dou Technique that would create a pushing effect and if you could train that Dou Technique to a high level then this Low Xuan level Vacuum Hand could have the power of a Middle to High Xuan Technique....” As if he didn’t see Xiao Yan’s fawning face, Yao Lao

muttered to himself.

"Teacher, you know that non-attack oriented Dou Techniques are super rare. Getting the Vacuum Hand was pure luck and now, where do you expect me to find a Dou Technique to compliment Vacuum Hand?" Xiao Yan tilted his head and said dejectedly.

"Stop making that innocent face. I know that your trying to get it from me!" Giving Xiao Yan an evil eye, Yao Lao angrily said.

"It's not like someone else didn't think of what you just thought up but these two non-attack oriented Dou Techniques are extremely rare and therefore, no one has been able to actually combine their effects."

"Even teacher doesn't have something?" Hearing that, Xiao Yan's small faced darkened. He knew that without a set technique to produce a pushing force, he would have to rely on his Dou Qi externalizing which was not a smart move.

Seeing Xiao Yan's dispirited face, Yao Lao smiled while massaging his forehead. After a while, he said: "There was someone before that begged me for a pill. I think that I took a Dou Technique like Vacuum Hand as payment. If I didn't have an already finished pill at that time, I would not have traded with that person! Hmm, this was pretty long ago, if you didn't remind me today, then I probably would have really forgotten about it."

"Alright...I found it!" Moving his finger from his forehead, Yao Lao placed his finger on Xiao Yan's forehead.

With the finger, a huge influx of information overwhelmed Xiao Yan and only after a while did Xiao Yan finally understand the new glob of information.

"Fire Palm: Low Xuan Level, Able to create huge gusts!"

The simple explanation along with the uncreative name made this Low Xuan Level technique seem extremely shabby.

"The founder of this was a blacksmith who had been a blacksmith for his entire life. Because of the fire of the furnace, after a couple decades, he invented this technique..." Watching the tight faced Xiao Yan, Yao Lao

taunted.

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan was quite impressed with the blacksmith. Creating a Dou Technique was no mean feat and definitely not something that an ordinary hammer wielding blacksmith could create.

Fire Palm wasn't hard to learn and under Yao Lao's help, Xiao Yan only took two hours before having an introductory grasp on the basics of it.

Standing in his room, Xiao Yan stared at the final flower vase in his room. Taking a deep breath and curling his hand, he said: "Vacuum Hand!"

With the strong pull, the flower vase quickly flew towards Xiao Yan.

Staring that the incoming vase, Xiao Yan quickly stopped using Vacuum Hand and forced his Dou Qi to follow the Qi Pathes of Fire Palm/ "Fire Palm!"

Right when the vase was about to hit Xiao Yan's forehead, a strong gust of wind emerged from Xiao Yan's hand and suddenly the room was subjected to a wind on par with a hurricane!

"Peng!"

Another crisp sound of a vase breaking sounded but this time, the vase was grinded into a fine dust from the two opposing forces.

"Great...."

With white dust covering his whole body, Xiao Yan quickly jumped out of the vase's "explosion" ground zero. Watching the outcome of the vase, light shone in Xiao Yan's eyes. If he was able to master both of the skills and change them without pause then he could make unprepared people take a huge loss.

Patting off the white dust, Xiao Yan knew that he had a new training task in the next three months.

Three months later will be his Coming of Age Ceremony.....

"Hehe, a lot of people are probably hoping that I make a fool of myself at the Coming of Age Ceremony right?" In the scattered room, a young and cold laughed sounded.

Chapter 29: An Important Day

The final three months had mostly passed and it was only a single month away from Xiao Yan's coming of age ceremony.

Within the clean room, Xiao Yan blankly stared at the green liquid inside the wood basin. What he was looking at was the last of the Foundation Elixir. At the final few stages of Duan Qi, it was becoming incredibly difficult to raise his Duan Qi. Xiao Yan's 7 Duan Qi hadn't been rising by much for the past three months and the feeling of breaking through to 8 Duan Qi never came to Xiao Yan.

Staring at the basin like a fool for a while, Xiao Yan finally pulled back his gaze while shaking his head: "Can I use this last Foundation Elixir to get to 8 Duan Qi?"

Slowly straightening his numb body, Xiao Yan, surprisingly, didn't start training. Instead, he took out black clothes from his closet...

The month before the Coming of Age Ceremony, all of the participants in the ceremony had to attend a test. The test was to eliminate those whose Dou Qi wasn't high enough. Those that had more than 7 Duan Qi were allowed a chance to go into the Dou Qi Hall to find a Qi Method after completing their Coming of Age Ceremony. On the other hand, those that were below 7 Duan Qi would lose that chance and be "exiled" to the clan's property after the ceremony. Unless they show exceptional talent or bravery, they would never get a chance to become part of the inner circle of the Xiao Clan...

Right after he put on his clothes, a light knock came from the door.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge, are you there?"

Hearing a high girly voice, Xiao Yan's brows jumped while he quickly buttoned his clothes before hiding the wood basin in a overlooked corner. After checking that all was fine, he slowly waltzed to the door and opened the door.

When the door opened, warm sunshine flew onto him and Xiao Yan

with the black clothing seemed especially spirited.

Outside of the door, a young girl wearing a light and refreshing green robe with a purple cloth belt was patiently waiting for Xiao Yan...

Watching the girl outside of his door, Xiao Yan was shocked for quite a while before recovering and said: "This early, I thought it was a goddess that came down but taking a closer look, it was Xun Er!"

Hearing Xiao Yan taunting praise, Xun Er's agile eyes blinked and her small mouth curved into a smile. However, from her brows that were almost in the shape of a crescent moon, one could tell the happiness she felt.

With a hint of happiness in her eyes, Xun Er raised her delicate chin and started examining the young man in front of her.

After a year's worth of training, Xiao Yan had grown out of his naivety and instead, on his delicate and well-figured face were a few hints of manly charm. After a long period of beat receiving training, his overall body tone was full of muscles and even though he was covered by a black shirt, his figure seemed rippling with energy.

Walking out of the room and closing the door, Xiao Yan finally saw the dumbstruck Xun Er that wasn't even blinking as she stared at him. Confused, Xiao Yan took a look of himself and asked: "Is there anything wrong with me?"

Her beautiful face blushing, Xun Er quickly moved her sight away and smiled: "Let's go Xiao Yan ge-ge. Today's the pre-test for the Coming of Age Ceremony, are you ready?"

Narrowing his eyes, Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders while his lips went up with a stubborn pride. His hands slowly curled into fists as he said: "The title of cripple, I'll return it to those that gave it to me today!"

Watching the confident Xiao Yan, Xun Er also nodded her head: "I believe in Xiao Yan ge-ge!"

"Of course you believe in me; you've probably determined what Duan Qi I'm at already." Xiao Yan gave her a white eye and helplessly said.

Watching the depressed Xiao Yan, Xun Er slightly nodded her head but quickly responded: "Getting to 7 Duan Qi from 3 Duan Qi in less than a year. Xiao Yan ge-ge's talent, even Xun Er's talent is far inferior to yours..."

"Alright let's go!"

Xiao Yan touched his nose and affectionately tapped Xun Er's head. Then he quickly starting taking huge strides to the clan's training field.

Watching the completely different backline of Xiao Yan, without the sadness and loneliness from the past, Xun er smiled and muttered: "Xiao Yan ge-ge, Xun Er knew that you would take back your respect and honor..."

.....

On the green rocked training field, at least a hundred boys and girls were waiting there. Their chatter was like a low roar that spread quite far.

At the middle of the training field was a huge black monument which was a testing monument that only clans with quite a bit of power could own because of its high price. Next to the black monument was the same impassive tester from 1 year ago.

On an elevated platform to the left of the training field were the clan's more prominent members. At the middle of the platform was the clan leader, Xiao Zhan, surrounded by the three elders.

Inside the field, the about to be tested examinees were all standing. Those that performed quite highly before didn't show much stress on their faces while those that didn't have much talent had tense and scared faces.

Xiao Zhan examined the people in the training field with a dark face and sighed inwardly. Yan Er, can you pass this test?

"Clan leader, it's almost time! Why isn't Xiao Yan here yet?" The second elder furrowed his brows and asked.

Xiao Zhan gave him a sideways glance and said: "It's not time yet, why be in such a hurry? The second elder I know isn't such a hasty person."

With the rebuttal from Xiao Zhan, the second elder's face was somewhat

ugly when he coldly retorted: “Even if you gave him that Foundation Elixir, he can’t possibly get to 7 Duan Qi in one month! You should stop hoping for some miracle.”

Hearing that, Xiao Zhan’s face flashed with anger. He was also worrying about that and the second elder hit his soft spot. But right when he was about respond to the second elder’s barebone words, a slight disturbance occurred in examinees in the training field.

Looking towards the disturbance, Xiao Zhan saw two shadows slowly coming over from the end of the path leading to the training field. Their steps weren’t hurried, as if they were unaffected by today’s test.

Narrowing his eyes to get a better sight of the black clothed young man’s light smile, Xiao Zhan didn’t know why but he felt much, much better all of a sudden....

Chapter 30: The one who humiliates gets humiliated in the end

Watching the Xiao Yan who was coming with Xun Er, the young men in the training field showed a face full of envy and disdain. In the entire Xiao Clan, the only one who was close to Xun Er was the famous cripple!

At the edge of the field and surrounded by a huge number of peers, Xiao Ning stared at Xiao Yan with anger emanating from his eyes.

“Little bastard, after today, let’s see if you have enough face to be with Xun Er.” With a low curse, Xiao Ning smiled thinking about the misfortune about to befall Xiao Yan.

Ignoring the gazes of envy and anger, Xiao Yan brought Xun Er to the back of the line and started chatting.

Watching the relaxed Xiao Yan, the people on the platform were all surprised thinking that maybe Xiao Yan didn’t know how this test would change his future...

“Hehe, he knows he’s going to fail.” The second elder teased.

The second elder was expecting Xiao Zhan to rage against him but after waiting for quite a while, Xiao Zhan didn’t say anything. In shock, the second elder tilted his head to look at Xiao Zhan.

“Second elder, instead of predictions, you should look at the results. Or else, when the time comes, you’d be throwing away face...” Xiao Zhan gave a deep glance at Xiao Yan who was relaxing under the sun.

His mouth twitching, the second elder retorted: “Hope so. I’m also hoping that he can bring me some surprises.”

“Alright, it’s time. Let’s start!” The first elder cut both of them off and started the test.

Xiao Zhan nodded while standing up. Taking a look at the silent training field, he roared: “You are all new blood of the Xiao Clan and should know the importance of this test. From the test, if you’re above 7 Duan Qi then

you've made it. However, if you didn't make it, you can challenge someone that's about 7 Duan Qi according to the rules. If you win, you will also make it!"

"Alright, now that everyone knows the rules, let's start the test!"

With Xiao Zhan's low roar, the trainees all began to tense up.

Besides the black monument, the impassive operator stepped up and took out a heavy pamphlet that had all of the names. His cold voice made him seem like the devil to people called out by him.

Cross legged sitting on the clean and smooth ground. Xiao Yan calmly watched those whose Dou Qi didn't make the requirement and were crying. Coldly pursing his lips, he didn't feel any pity for them; he knew from first hand experience that they loved to pick on those that had lower Dou Qi than them, in particular, the "cripple" that was once a genius.

When they were insulting clansmen that were of lower Dou Qi than themselves, they probably never thought that this day would come.

The one who humiliates gets humiliated in the end.

Xun Er sitting next to Xiao Yan also was impassive. Like a lotus that wouldn't be affected by the mud around it, she slowly twirled her head while sneaking peeks at Xiao Yan.

"Xiao Mei!"

The operator's cold voice brought a jump to Xiao Yan brows and his closed eyelids slowly went up.

Xun Er who was intently watching Xiao Yan from the side curled her nose as she saw Xiao Yan's actions.

Hmm, she used to be quite close to Xiao Yan ge-ge.... While narrowing her eyes, Xun Er stared at the red clothed girl walking up.

Soon, Xun Er blinked and tilted her head to look at Xiao Yan's curved smile, saying: "I'm quite curious about what kind of attitude she'll have towards Xiao Yan ge-ge after today."

Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders and whispered back: "Some things, once

destroyed, will always be destroyed. No matter how much it's repaired, there will always be an obvious crack. In this clan, there aren't many people that I approve of..."

"Does Xun Er count?" Xun Er's red mouth made a mischievous smile as she asked Xiao Yan.

Taking a strand of Xun Er's hair and gently slipping it through his finger, Xiao Yan answered: "Of course!"

Her large eyes curved into beautiful crescent moons while her actual gaze fell upon a blank space. The sight of her was entrancing...

Back when we were still small, he would sneak into my room and try to help me improve my body. Even though it was such a stupid method that looking back on it, I can't believe that he would have thought it up, he still continued it for 2 years....

A smile appeared on her delicate face bringing out two cute dimples. Turning her head, Xun Er thought: In this entire clan, there aren't many people that Xun Er approves of either, only you...

From afar, Xiao Ning felt his face twitching when he say the close conversation between Xiao Yan and Xun Er. Jealousy raged in his heart while he resisted the urge to go over there and destroy "perfect" scene.

"Dou Zi Li: 8 Duan!"

TL: Dou Zi Li, Dou Qi and Dou Zi Qi are all the same thing - Dou Qi

On the black monument, a bright light was emitted as those words were displayed on it.

"Xiao Mei: Dou Zi Li, 8 Duan, High level!" Taking a glance at the black monument, the impassive operator slightly nodded while calling out her score.

Hearing the operator's voice, Xiao Mei let out a breath as her face became filled with pride. To go from 7 Duan Qi to 8 Duan Qi in just one year was an accomplishment that would net her among the top 5 in her generation. With such an impressive result, it was no wonder that she

would be so excited.

The operator's voice led a huge disturbance within within the training fields as glances of envy and jealousy fell towards Xiao Mei.

"To raise 1 Duan Qi in 1 year, barely decent..." Touching his nose, Xiao Yan calmly evaluated.

"Yup." Xun Er played with her hair as she carelessly glanced over Xiao Mei who was surrounded by her friends like a princess.

But after Xiao Mei, out of the dozen or so people, only one person got to 7 Duan Qi. The rest were all eliminated.

"Xiao Xun Er!"

The impassive operator, surprisingly, had a bit of emotion when he called this name.

Everyone's gaze fell upon Xun Er who was sitting next to Xiao Yan as they heard that name.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge, don't be too surprised later..." Standing up, Xun Er bent down to mischievously smile at Xiao Yan.

His brows twitching, Xiao Yan watched the beautiful backline of Xun Er as he muttered: "Did she become a Dou Zhe?"

Chapter 31: One Star Dou Zhe

Looking at the green-clothed girl firmly walking forward, the training field became silent as blazing gazes focused upon her figure. From the high platform, all high class clan members stopped their chatter as they also focused on the pearl of Xiao clan.

Xiao Zhan, together with the 3 elders, all had a serious face, with a hint of curiosity. They really want to know what stage the number one person of the younger generation in Xiao Clan has achieved after one year of training.

.....

Here, all eyes zoomed intensively downwards at the girl who is walking towards the stone monument at a pace that was neither slow nor fast. She raised her small hand, revealing her snow-white skin as the sleeve is pulled back.

As her precious hand softly touched the stone monument, Xun Er gradually closes her eyes as her inner Dou Qi quickly strengthened.

Accepting the incoming Dou Qi, the ever silent monument shined out bright rays of light.

One Star Dou Zhe!

Looking at these four giant words shinning on the stone monument in the center of the training ground, for a moment everybody was silenced, then as if awakening, they all burst into cheers.

“Miss Xun Er, One Star Dou Zhe!”

Being surprised by the four shining yellow letters, the operator couldn't help but shake his head.

“Haha... 15 years old Dou Zhe... she truly is...”

Listening to the announcement of the examiner, Xiao Zhan took a light breath but his last words became mumbled.

The 3 elders lightly nodded as their faces showed their surprise.

Although there was still a slight difference with Xiao Yan's achievement of becoming a Dou Zhe when he was 12 years old, this training speed of hers can be considered monstrous.

In the middle of the training ground, Xiao Mei who had just been admired by everyone, was also dizzied by the four shining words on the stone pillar. Staring at the monument, she felt a sense of helplessness. Only 15 years old to become a One Star Dou Zhe, that achievement blinded her who didn't expect that prowess from Xun Er.

At the end of the crowd, Xiao Yan nervously pursed his lips. He didn't expect Xun Er to enter the Dou Zhe zone and also reach one star, a whole tier above someone who just compressed his or her Qi cyclone. This speed of training can even be compared to him who's using Foundation Elixir to boost his training speed.

Xun Er ignored the other people and furrowed her brow disapprovingly as if she didn't like the attention. Then she walked back into the crowd and noticing Xiao Yan's surprise, she smiled playfully.

"Don't be so proud! With your talent, this achievement is within my expectation. If you didn't reach Dou Zhe level then I would be quite surprised." Xiao Yan shrugged and joked.

Hearing that, Xun Er's little face became sorrowful for a moment glancing at him.

Pulling Xun Er to sit down on the mat, Xiao Yan looked bored as he observed other clan members continuing the examinations.

Honestly speaking, to train one's Dou Qi to 7 Duan Qi before the age of 15 required decent talent to succeed. However, those with decent talent aren't as plentiful as one may think and even within the entire Xiao Clan, only 2 to 3 tenths people make it.

As time passed, more and more people were deemed unqualified, dulling the atmosphere of the training field. Those that didn't pass showed a long face when they were rejected but when they saw others also not pass, a slight smile would creep onto their faces.

Sitting on the ground, Xiao Yan continued to observe the examination; over a hundred of examinee but only two people were like Xiao Mei and got 8 Duan Qi and nobody achieved 9 Duan Qi let alone becoming a Dou Zhe, of course it's with Xun Er excluded.

On the field, the number of examinees slowly dwindled and finally there were only Xiao Yan and several people left.

Soon, a bleak young examinee stood up and went up even though he knew that he had no chance of qualifying.

For the last dozen or so examinees, everybody knew that these people were at the bottom of the clan and if not for fair examinations, it was probably that these people would have been disqualified without ever testing.

“Xiao Yan!”

Standing next to the stone pillar below, the operator announced the name with difficulty.

“Xiao Yan-ge ge, it’s your turn...” Xun Er said gently, her soft small hands lightly holding Xiao Yan’s hand.

Slightly raising his head, Xiao Yan opened his eyes and scanned the training field. He couldn’t help but snicker when he saw the gazes filled with expectations of his failure!

Slowly standing up, Xiao Yan turned his head toward the high platform and grinned at Xiao Zhan.

Looking at his son coming forward while smiling toward him, Xiao Zhan cheerfully nodded his head while one hand brought a teacup forward and smoothly laid back on his chair.

Silently inhaling, Xiao Yan confidently walked toward the stone pillar; his eyes shined a strange light that made the laughing clan members widen their eyes.

Under complex gazes, Xiao Yan finally got to the black monument.

Looking at the black-clothed youth in front of him, the examiner sighed

internally. That year, when Xiao Yan created a miracle, he was the first one to witness it but he was also the witness of the sad steps of the genius 3 years after that bright shine. If today's miracle doesn't happen, this would also be the last time this youth gets examined.

On the training ground, the intense gazes focused on Xiao Yan whose chest slowly rose as he brought his hand forward and rested it upon the cold, hard, stone pillar.

At this moment, everybody focused their gaze upon the monument. They all knew that this was the last time they would ever see the genius who once shocked all of Wu Tan City in a Dou Qi examination.

The stone monument went silent for a moment before bright light blazed out!

Upon the stone monument were bright yellow words, making all the hearts in the field stop for a moment.

“Dou Zi Li...7 Duan!”

Chapter 32: Challenge

Silence, a death-like silence!

Everyone in the field looked at the monument's 5 words in shock. Their facial expressions were colorful and soon, countless deep breaths resonated throughout the field!

"Kacha!"

On the high platform, Xiao Zhan's jade cup was crushed to dust as a mix of dust and tea trickled down his hand.

"7 Duan... Yan Er, you.... you really did it!" Xiao Zhan's eyes moistened as he watched the young man under the black monument. He knew that in order to get to 7 Duan Qi, Xiao Yan must have made an incredible effort.

The three elders next to Xiao Zhan had faces full of incredulity. To have gone from 3 Duan Qi just a year ago to 7 Duan? This speed...impossible!

"Hehe...Clan leader's Foundation Elixir.... is, is pretty good, hehe." The second elder swallowed dryly and combined his shock with his not yet gone taunt from before to make a ridiculous expression.

Xiao Zhan didn't hide his excitement when he said: "Second elder, do you really believe that a second tier Foundation Elixir has such a strong effect?"

The second elder paused before shaking his head. He was no idiot and knew that even though the Foundation Elixir could raise one's training speed, it was physically impossible to raise 4 Duan Qi within a year!

....

Next to the black monument, the operator blankly stared at the words on the monument as his impassive face was now full of shock.

"Xiao Yan: Dou Zi Qi, 7 Duan, High level!"

Taking a deep breath to calm his shock, the operator tried hard to keep his voice calm but a couple of tremors could still be heard.

Hearing the operator's announcement, the originally silent field had

gone deathly quiet. No one even rustled their clothing or fidgeted.

In the crowd, Xiao Mei covered her red mouth as her face was frozen in a moment of incredible shock.

To raise 4 Duan Qi in a year was like a myth, only heard of in legends! This was a speed that even the Xiao Yan three years ago, at his peak, could not have done!

But, this mythical speed, coming from a “cripple” was displayed in front of their eyes!

With complex emotions, Xiao Mei stared at the young man next to the black monument while a thought popped up in her head: His incredible talent seems to have come back!

At the edge of the training field, Xiao Ning who was ready to insult Xiao Yan was also blankly staring at the monument while whispering: “This... How is this possible?”

....

Looking up to the golden words on the monument, Xiao Yan let out a light breath. Taking in the complex gazes around made him recall the glory that he had gone through three years ago.

Now that his training talent had come back, he had also gained a mature mind and stubborn persistence.

Taking a deep look at the monument that had determined his fate, not once, not twice by thrice, Xiao Yan made a slight smile. His calm and passive demeanor was a sharp contrast from his gleeful attitude three years ago.

Taking a small breath, Xiao Yan walked down under the penetrating gaze of everyone and sat down next to Xun Er.

Even though Xiao Yan had left the monument, the entire field was still silent.

“Ahem...” On the high platform Xiao Zhan happily stood up and coughed to gather the attention of everyone in the field.

“The examination has finished. Next up, those that did not make have the chance to challenge someone who has already passed. Remember, there’s only one chance!” Xiao Zhan said with a smile.

Hearing that, the training field became disorderly. Those that only missed the cut off by a bit sent their hot gazes towards those that made it.

Watching the challenging gazes, the clansmen that made the cut would raise their heads in disdain. There was a huge gap between 6 Duan Qi and 7 Duan Qi and without any special occurrences, someone who’s 6 Duan Qi couldn’t even touch someone who’s 7 Duan Qi.

The 6 Duan Qi people knew this very well but this was their last chance to stay in the inner circles of the clan. They would have to try and hope for a miracle.

With Xiao Zhan’s words, the atmosphere in the training field took a weird turn. Intense gazes swept across those that made the cut and silently chose the weakest opponent.

Sitting on the ground, Xiao Yan suddenly opened his eyes in surprise. A majority of the gazes were directed at him.

“Do I look like someone who can be beat so easily?” After a brief period of shock, Xiao Yan laughed on the inside.

“Xiao Yan ge-ge jumped 4 Duan Qi in one year. Even though it’s shocking, it’s so shocking that many people don’t believe it. Therefore, they would think that Xiao Yan is the easiest opponent.” Beside him, Xun Er explained.

Carelessly shrugging his shoulders, Xiao Yan patted the dust off of his robe while saying: “They can choose to not believe it, but they will know...”

Xun Er gave a smile and nodded.

Finally, after a brief period of calm, someone couldn’t stand it and stood up.

A well built young man, under everyone’s gaze, quickly walked in front of Xiao Yan and loudly said: “Xiao Yan biao-di, please!”

Even though the young man was respectful, Xiao Yan, who was across from him, could see hints of disbelief flash through his eyes. In addition, his face showed an arrogant disdain. Looks like he hasn't recovered from Xiao Yan former name of being a "cripple".

Chapter 33: Proof

Watching the quick challenger, the other unqualified clansmen let out a sigh of regret. It seemed like they were all envious of the well built young man in front of Xiao Yan!

Xiao Yan narrowed his eyes as he examined the young man. Even though he didn't know all of the clansmen in the clan, he had quite an impression of the young man in front of him.

If his memory served him, the young man was called Xiao Ke and was a supporter of the first elder. Normally, he'd follow behind Xiao Ning like a small henchman and when Xiao Yan fell from "genius", Xiao Ke never showed him any kindness and instead trampled over Xiao Yan's dignity.

Recalling old memories, Xiao Yan's mouth curved to a dangerous angle.

Turning to look at the smiling Xun Er, Xiao Yan smiled while nodding, saying: "Alright, I accept."

Seeing how easily Xiao Yan answered, Xiao Ke's eyebrows twitched and a sense of fear snuck into his heart. Drily swallowing, Xiao Ke started to regret his recklessness.

Even though he was somewhat regretful, Xiao Ke couldn't back down and had to continue through.

No way, to raise 4 Duan Qi in one year is impossible. This guy must have used some method to fool everyone! I can definitely beat him! After wordlessly encouraging himself, Xiao Ke smiled: "Then I'll see how Xiao Yan biao-di's strength!"

Xiao Yan smiled and didn't say anything. Standing up, he walked to the center of the training field and motioned for Xiao Ke to follow him.

Watching the calm Xiao Yan, Xiao Ke's heart skipped a beat and he no longer felt so sure. Forcefully smiling, he walked with stiff strides into the field.

With the two people in the field, even the calculating gazes from the people who did not pass quickly moved onto the two in the field.

On the high platform, Xiao Zhan took a handkerchief that was brought up to him and cleaned his hand of residue tea while intently staring at the training field with a sense of tension in his eyes.

To be honest, no only did the younger generation have doubt about Xiao Yan's achievements, Xiao Zhan himself couldn't completely believe it either. This wasn't because of his lack of trust in Xiao Yan but rather because of how impossible of a feat it was to raise 4 Duan Qi in just 1 year. It was unhumanly and even the Xiao Yan four years ago couldn't hope to achieve that.

Because of how incredible the achievements was, everyone couldn't believe what they were saying.

But no matter if it was fake or real, no matter if the others believed it or not, once Xiao Yan fought, his real strength would be exposed. At that time, everyone would have their thoughts confirmed or disproved!

Besides Xiao Zhan, the three elders' breathing intensified as their hands gripped deep hand marks on their respective chairs and their muddled eyes stared at the training field.

In the green rocked training field, everyone's vision was glued to the two within the training field. Once Xiao Yan fought with Xiao Ke, everything would be clear!

"It's definitely fake!" At the edge of the training field, Xiao Ning licked his dry lips and angrily whispered.

"It should be...fake right?" Within the crowd, Xiao Mei bit her lip. She couldn't believe that the young man that had been crippled three years would have such an monstrous achievement.

Under stare after stare, Xiao Yan and Xiao Ke in the training field had already finished their perfunctory ritual gestures and were about to fight!

Both of Xiao Ke's hands were tilted upwards as light Dou Qi started swirling around around his hands. Taking a deep breath, Xiao Ke stomped heavily on the ground and started to ram towards Xiao Yan.

Low level fights didn't have any complex gestures and were composed of

the simplest attacks.

“Splitting Mountain Hand!”

Quickly nearing Xiao Yan, Xiao Ke’s right hand quickly gathered Dou Qi as it swept over to Xiao Yan’s chest.

Splitting Mountain Hand, a middle Huang Dou Technique that was only available to clan members 5 Duan Qi and higher.

With the gust incoming, the lagging hair on Xiao Yan’s face blew away as a pair of dark eyes were revealed. Blinking, Xiao Yan narrowed his eyes watching the ever nearer hand.

When the hand finally reached Xiao Yan’s shoulder, Xiao Yan smoothly took a step to the left. With a year’s worth of body training, Xiao Yan’s reactions were incredibly quick.

With only 1 step, Xiao Yan avoided Xiao Ke’s attack. At the same time, Xiao Yan lightly twisted his body as his hand reached through Xiao Ke’s arm and went to Xiao Ke’s shoulder as if he was picking a leaf from a tree.

“Shatter Rock Hand!”

Shatter Rock Hand, a low Huang Level Dou Technique that only required 3 Duan Qi to learn!

“Peng!” A dull sound occurred as Xiao Yan’s hand landed firmly on Xiao Ke’s shoulder, causing Xiao Ke’s flush red face to pale. With a low grunt, he slowly scatter stepped backwards before finally losing strength in his legs and fell to the ground like a turtle.

The whole field was silent. Xiao Ke’s defeat proved many things.

Defeating his opponent in one attack, Xiao Yan shaked his head bored. This kind of opponent wasn’t even a challenge for Xiao Yan. Not mentioning Octane Blast, Xiao Yan hadn’t even used half of his strength yet.

Of course, contrary to Xiao Yan’s bored feeling, everyone within the field was shocked. Many of them slowly closed their eyes because Xiao Yan had to be at least 7 Duan Qi to have easily beat Xiao Ke who was a 6 Duan Qi.

Thinking about that, Xiao Yan's previous monstrous performance was proved... to be true!

To raise 4 Duan Qi in just 1 year, his result was a miracle within a miracle.

On the high platform. Xiao Zhan let out a deep breath as a weight was lifted from his heart.

“.....It’s true, 7 Duan Qi...”

Watching the defeated Xiao Ke, Xiao Mei’s small hand covered her red lips as she couldn’t help but gasp.

Chapter 34: Turning Around

Watching the black clothed young man with his hands behind back, the whole field was quiet again.

On the high platform, Xiao Zhan's smile slowly widen before finally, he couldn't help but laugh out loud.

Hearing the gleeful laughter from Xiao Zhan, the three elders looked at each other and sighed. However, they didn't try to do anything else against Xiao Yan. The potential displayed by Xiao Yan gave them a sense of defeat. 4 Duan Qi in 1 year was something that would make anyone shocked, their sons and grandsons, wouldn't hope to ever have that pace.

With a light heart, Xiao Zhan clapped with announcing: "Xiao Ke zhi-er has lost. Hopefully you will continue to train hard!"

TL: Zhi-er is Nephew in Chinese

In the training field, the pale faced Xiao Ke heard the announcement and drooped his head in disappointment. Taking a look at the black clothed young man not far from him, he recalled about how he had insulted the very person, calling him a "cripple" just a year ago. Now one year later, the "cripple" was quite close to the top of the clan and far above him. This extreme difference made Xiao Ke recall the words he had heard in the hall just a few months before: "Thirty years east, thirty years west, don't you dare bully me because I'm poor now!"

Shaking his head with a bitter smile, Xiao Ke got up with some difficulty. Slightly bowing to Xiao Yan, Xiao Ke's voice had lost all of its arrogance from before: "Xiao Yan Biao-di, you won. Congratulations on your recovery!"

Nodding, Xiao Yan's gaze slowly swept across the training field and those that met his dark pupils all turned away their gaze with nervousness and unease.

His gaze pausing on Xiao Mei who was staring at him, Xiao Yan twisted his face to face the clansmen that didn't pass and asked with a smile: "Is

there anyone else who would like to challenge me?”

Watching Xiao Yan, the clansmen that were eager to challenge Xiao Yan before Xiao Ke went up all closed their mouths and looked up at the sky as if Xiao Yan’s words had nothing to do with them. None of them would go up and be the second challenger.

Watching the childness acts of pretending to be a fool, Xiao Yan lightly shrugged and walked back.

Seeing Xiao Yan sit besides her, Xun Er smiled while examining the field. Picking up a strand of her hair and twirling it, she whispered: “Xiao Yan ge-ge, three years ago, they looked at you like this...”

“Three years ago, I would have been excited by their respectful and fearful gazes but today... I don’t feel anything.” Xiao Yan touched his nose and laughed.

“Then Xiao Yan ge-ge has matured!” Xun Er playfully blinked her eyes.

“Not more mature than you. Sometimes I feel as if there’s a thousand year monster hiding within you!” Being called mature by a girl, Xiao Yan couldn’t help up laugh. Intimately rubbing Xun Er’s head, he let out a smile.

Hearing that, Xun Er gave Xiao Yan an evil eye and her delicate face showed an expression of rebuke. No matter how carefree a girl was, no one ever liked being called an old monster.

Xun Er’s expression of rebuke was so pretty that it attracted the stares of the young men around her and even the stares of some of the girls!

“That brat, too pompous...” Xiao Ning, like the others, was also attracted to Xun Er’s expression of rebuke but looking at the intimate chatter between Xun Er and Xiao Yan, an envious flame burned within him. His jealousy covered up his reasoning as he thought that only he could match Xun Er within the entire clan but thinking back, he realized that no matter what he did, Xun Er rarely smiled. On the other hand, Xiao Yan, who was a “cripple”, could always make Xun Er laugh. The difference between them made Xiao Ning crush his teeth in anger.

"Brat, I'll let you be arrogant for now but when the Coming of Age Ceremony comes, I will make you look for your fallen teeth in front of Xun Er!" Clenching his hands into fits, Xiao Ning gave a cold stare to the cross-legged Xiao Yan.

Even though Xiao Ning was also shocked by Xiao Yan's training speed in the past year, he couldn't change his haughty manner that he was used to. In addition, Xiao Ning, being the only male within the entire clan that could barely be compared to Xun Er, felt a sense of danger from Xiao Yan's sudden performance.

Before he grows strong, I'll give him a merciless beating. The best case scenario is that the beating would leave a scar and break him from his training!

While thinking his evil thoughts, the corners of Xiao Ning's mouth curved into a smile. Even though Xiao Yan was at 7 Duan Qi, Xiao Ning was still confident in his 8 Duan Qi. After all, each Duan of Qi after 7 Duan Qi had a huge difference between them!

Chatting in a low voice with Xun Er, Xiao Yan's aimlessly sight gazed around the sides of the training field and caught the smile on Xiao Ning's face. Thinking for a moment, Xiao Yan realized what the smile was about and smiled himself, thinking: Someone who can't even cover up his or her emotions can't pose to be a risk at all.

....

After Xiao Ke lost to Xiao Yan, no one else dared to challenge Xiao Yan who was sitting down and those clansmen that didn't qualify set their sights on others. But after a couple rounds of challenges, only two people, relying on luck and familiar Dou Techniques, were able to beat their opponent and qualify for the Coming of Age Ceremony.

Watching the slowly calming training field, the smiling Xiao Zhan stood up and announced the results along with a couple of notices about next month's Coming of Age Ceremony.

Slowly standing up, Xiao Yan smiled towards the happy Xiao Zhan on the stage while Xiao Zhan wasn't stingy about giving his qualified son, a

thumbs up.

Right after dusting off his clothes, Xiao Yan detected a perfumed scent.

Curling his brows slightly, Xiao Yan lifted his head to see Xiao Mei standing in front of him and asked: "Do you need anything?"

Seeing the impassiveness and coldness on Xiao Yan's face, Xiao Mei's courage faltered as she forced out a smile and said: "Xiao Yan biao-di, congratulations."

"Thanks." Slightly nodding, Xiao Yan glanced at Xun Er besides him.

"Xiao Yan biao-di, my father will be personally teaching a High Huang level Dou Technique at the Dou Technique Hall tomorrow. Do you want to come with me?" Xiao Mei smiled and her combination of a female's charm and a youth's delicacy created an irresistible question.

Hearing that, Xiao Yan's brows slightly jumped.

Right when Xiao Yan was about to find an excuse to reject Xiao Mei, a pale white arm slipped through and locked with his arm.

Shocked, Xiao Yan turned around to find a smiling Xun Er.

"Really sorry Xiao Mei biao-jie, Xun Er has already invited Xiao Yan gege to accompany me tomorrow to visit Wu Tan City and so he can't be going with Xiao Mei biao-jie to the Dou Technique Hall." Under stunned stares, Xun Er held on to Xiao Yan's arm while a hint of apology lingered on her delicate face.

Chapter 35: Guilt

Hearing Xun Er's words, Xiao Mei paused and weighed her thoughts carefully. If it was any other girl within the clan, Xiao Mei was confident that she could come out on top based on her beauty and talent, but towards Xun Er, Xiao Mei could only admit defeat.

Seeing that Xiao Yan's face was impassive, Xiao Mei gave a self-deprecating smile and could only leave in defeat.

The crowd within the training field stared at Xiao Yan who was being leaned on by Xun Er and they all felt twinges of jealousy. When had Xun Er, being the brightest pearl of the entire clan, been so close with another male?

Watching Xiao Mei awkwardly walking away, Xiao Yan was stunned and turning his head to see the smiling Xun Er, he taunted: "Girl, what are you doing?"

Xun Er still hung onto Xiao Yan's arm as she glanced over at the staring crowd and innocently said: "Wasn't Xiao Yan ge-ge about to reject her anyways?"

Hearing that, Xiao Yan rolled his eyes – the excuse he had in mind was completely different from what Xun Er implied with her excuse. Remembering the awkward expression on Xiao Mei's face, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head while thinking: Did Xun Er do that on purpose?

"It's just that Xun Er doesn't like how fast she changed. Haha, going to Dou Technique Hall to learn a Dou Technique together... she never invited you in the past three years." Xun Er dragged Xiao Yan out of the training field slowly as she ignored the gazes around her. At the same time, she muttered words that only Xiao Yan could hear, looks like she really didn't like how quickly Xiao Mei changed.

Lightly shrugging, Xiao Yan agreed with Xun Er with a bitter smile. Three years ago, Xiao Mei was quite close to him but when Xiao Yan received the title of "cripple", he was able to see how "realistic" Xiao Mei was.

Watching Xiao Yan and Xun Er leave the field, Xiao Ning's face twitched while his hands clenched so hard that bone cracking sounds could be heard. His jealousy even made his eyes slightly red.

"Brat, one month from now, I'll break all of your teeth!" Xiao Ning spit the words out as he angrily left the training field.

On the high platform, Xiao Zhan was about to leave when he saw the scene and intently stared at Xun Er and Xiao Yan while a hint of worry flashed across his eyes. Yan Er, he... does he like Xun Er? Xun Er's background... not even Nalan Yanran can compare to her. Even with genius level talent, it would be extremely difficult to be approved by the power behind her.

After thinking for a while, Xiao Zhan let out a sigh as he slowly left.

....

While walking, Xiao Yan would suddenly blank out as he recalled what had just happened.

Turning a corner, Xun Er suddenly let go of Xiao Yan's arm with a red face. Pushing out her cheeks, she stared at Xiao Yan accusingly.

Losing the momentum that was dragging him forward, Xiao Yan felt at a loss as to what to do and even sighed for no reason. His eyes moved to Xun Er as he thought about what Xun Er implied.

Feeling the blank stare of Xiao Yan, Xun Er small face flushed red as her hands instinctively raised up and she said: "Xiao Yan ge-ge, you..."

"Ahem...ahem..." Waking up from his stupor, Xiao Yan violently coughed while his face became an unhealthy red and he thought: When did I go so low, to think that towards my own sister?

Even though Xun Er and Xiao Yan didn't have an actual blood relation, they both lived with each other for over a decade and their relation wasn't much worse than that of a blood brother or sister. It wasn't surprising that Xiao Yan had already thought of Xun Er as his little sister and felt guilt and repulsion towards himself when he realized what he was thinking about...

With the sudden realization, the atmosphere became quite awkward.

Xun Er lowered her head and her usual elegance had been replaced with a girl's embarrassment. Occasionally, she tilted her gaze to peek at the side of Xiao Yan's face who was looking straight forward.

Under the awkward atmosphere, the not very long path felt like a great conquest that took forever to get to the end.

Of course, despite how long the conquest felt like, it had an end, where the path split in two directions. At here, Xiao Yan softly said bye and started fleeing.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge."

Watching the panicked Xiao Yan, Xun Er was stunned by the sight before she called out.

"Huh?" Stopping, Xiao Yan looked back to see Xun Er standing beneath a willow and his heart started beating quickly again.

Xun Er had a green robe with a purple belt that fluttered in the wind. She and the willow behind her made a picture that didn't seem earthly.

"Tomorrow... will you accompany Xun Er?"

Under the branches of the willow, the girl's delicate face had a red flush as her jade teeth bit her pink lips. A pair of beautiful eyes were watching Xiao Yan with a hint of anticipation...

Chapter 36: The Comical Breakthrough

It was hard to believe that the elegant Xun Er would speak such girly words; her charm made Xiao Yan's mind wander again...

Silently criticizing himself again, Xiao Yan replied in a muffled tone. Afterwards, he fled while being under the smiling gaze of Xun Er.

Watching the leaving Xiao Yan, Xun Er covered her mouth while laughing. Then, she furrowed her brows and went to a pond not too far away.

The reflection in the pond showed a pretty face with bright eyes and white teeth. With each of her gestures, there was an inexplicable charm that drew one in.

"So pretty...." Doing a twirl, a satisfied smile appeared on Xun Er's lips.

Not far away, a couple of young men that had just returned to the clan after adventures outside stopped with their mouths wide open. Their eyes showed their surprise while they foolishly watched the girl under the willow.

.....

Shrinking back to his room, Xiao Yan let out a big breath as he closed the door. Wiping off the cold sweat on his forehead, he bitterly smiled: This girl, when she grows up, she is probably going to be even prettier than Ya Fei at the auction...

Sitting down at his table, Xiao Yan gulped out a mouthful of tea while his mind was still full of Xun Er. Remembering how pretty Xun Er's eyes were, Xiao Yan suddenly felt a burning in his heart.

Shaking his head, Xiao Yan cursed bastard towards himself and finally calmed down.

Swinging his sore arms, Xiao Yan went to the corner of his room and took out the wood basin that was full of Foundation Elixir before quickly jumping in.

With the cool water pulsing against his skin, a moderate warmth spread through Xiao Yan's body and slowly washed away the tiredness in him.

As ripples formed, Xiao Yan lazily laid on the side of the wooden basin as his breath slowed and calmed.

Recalling the shock on everyone's face today at the training field, a smile appeared on Xiao Yan's face: Strength, the most important thing in this world!

While rubbing his temples, a cold but pretty face unexpectedly popped into his mind. It was... Nalan Yanran's.

With his eyes narrowed, Xiao Yan muttered: "2 more years? You better get ready because I will find you..."

If not for the coldness within the words, anyone would have assumed that Xiao Yan's words were to a lover and not a bitter rival.

Remembering Nalan Yanran's cavalier attitude and phrases in the main hall, Xiao Yan's hands slowly curled into fists. The shame that he experienced, was imprinted in him...

Haha, I can't even take a break. That person... even though she's arrogant, to have been taken in by the faction leader of the Faction of Misty Clouds, her talent and potential shouldn't be too shabby. Xiao Yan's lips made a cold smile.

Taking a deep breath, Xiao Yan realized that every time he thought of Nalan Yanran, he would have a new strength that would push him to his limits. He quickly dispensed his lazy position and sat up straight within the wood basin. His hands weaved to make a symbol before he slowly pushed all thoughts out of his mind to start training.

.....

Ever since the examination of the other day, Xiao Yan could clearly feel that the gazes the clansmen sent him were no longer full of ridicule but rather filled with respect.

To these new gazes that he had already experienced three years ago,

Xiao Yan was calm and impassive without becoming full of himself because of how “respected” he was.

The day after the examination finished, Xiao Yan stayed true to his word and accompanied Xun Er to enjoy sights both in the city and in the mountains. Besides his father, Xiao Zhan, Xun Er was the closest person within the clan to Xiao Yan and therefore, Xiao Yan couldn’t refuse any of her requests.

After a relaxing day, Xiao Yan’s life returned to its calm and orderly state.

He would practice Dou Techniques in the back of the mountains in the morning, before returning to his room to train Dou Qi for the rest of the time and occasionally chat with Xun Er and his father; his life was simple and organized.

During this period, Xiao Yan occasionally met Xiao Mei while walking around the clan and when he heard the soft purr of “Xiao Yan biao-ge”, he replied with a smile and some excuses to escape. Towards those who abandoned him in his years of hardship, Xiao Yan never went back to being close with them.

He knew that those that suddenly became respectful and friendly to him because of his reborn talent would act like a cold stranger the moment he loses his talent. This kind of backstab, experiencing it once was enough.

....

A month’s time slowly passed and there were only 7 days left before Xiao Clan’s Coming of Age Ceremony....

Even though a huge amount of time had passed, from the examination to 7 days before the Coming of Age Ceremony, Xiao Yan’s wish to get to 8 Duan Qi had still not been answered which let him down.

After striving for 8 Duan Qi for two more days, Xiao Yan still didn’t experience breakthrough and amidst disappointment, he relaxed his training so that he could be in top notch condition for the Coming of Age Ceremony. But, right when he thought that he didn’t have any hope of

making a breakthrough and jumping into 8 Duan Qi, an interesting surprise came.

During the night that was two days before the Coming of Age Ceremony, Xiao Yan who was in a deep slumber suddenly jumped up like he was dreamwalking and before he even took off his clothes, he jumped into the wood basin that barely had any Foundation Elixir left.

After struggling for half a night, Xiao Yan finally opened his eyes, still sleepy, and then... He realized that the illustrious 8 Duan that he had been fighting to reach for 2-3 months had finally, while he was still half asleep, been achieved...

Towards this baffling yet comical breakthrough, Xiao Yan, while happy and surprised, could only exclaim: "Really!"

Chapter 37: Xiao Yu

If a clan wants to be able to prosper over the years, the most important factor is the clan's "vitality". And the vitality of the clan is the clan's younger generation, the "new blood" of the clan. Only with a continuous supply of "new blood" can a clan, a huge "machine", run smoothly.

Therefore, the Coming of Age Ceremony, is a huge day for every clan, including the Xiao Clan.

As one of the top three clans in Wu Tan City, Xiao Clan's Coming of Age Ceremony attracted the attention of most forces in the city and those that had a good relationship with Xiao Clan even came to watch the ceremony.

....

Accompanying Xun Er under the shade of a large tree, Xiao Yan relaxingly sat.

Xiao Yan narrowed his eyes while looking at the huge platform in the middle of the training field. The platform was made of huge blocks of lumber and was specially made for the Coming of Age Ceremony that was about to happen.

Xiao Yan's gaze left the empty wooden platform and went to the people that were not part of Xiao Clan but still there to witness the Coming of Age Ceremony. With reluctance, he said: "There are quite a few people..."

Watching Xiao Yan's unhappy face, Xun Er, who knew that Xiao Yan liked serenity, gloated with laughter.

Just as her laugh sounded, Xun Er felt Xiao Yan's accusing gaze and quickly closed her mouth. Taking a look at Xiao Yan, her eyes had a hint of light gold flash across before she said: "Xiao Yan ge-ge got to 8 Duan Qi?"

Hearing that, Xiao Yan tilted his head to look at her and realized that while being around Xun Er, he couldn't keep any secrets. With a depressed heart, he feebly nodded.

"Woah... not even a month had passed and you already got to 8 Duan Qi.

This speed... is quite scary." Seeing Xiao Yan nod, even with Xun Er's calm nature, she showed a face of surprise.

Giving her a white eye to Xun Er, Xiao Yan's face suddenly turned. Near the wooden platform, there was a woman that was wrapped in a red dress and was chatting with the people besides her. A circle of people surrounded her, making the spot where she was at, the most popular circle around the platform.

This red dressed woman that was attracting everyone was someone that Xiao Yan had seen before! She was the top auctioneer of the Primer Auction house, Ya Fei!

With his gaze lingering the water-snake like waist of Ya Fei, Xiao Yan gave his opinion silently: "Really pretty!"

After Xiao Yan's gaze had stayed on Ya Fei for a while, Xun Er's unhappy hump came from besides him.

"Ahem..." With his eyes blinking, Xiao Yan slowly retracted his gaze to act as if he wasn't staring at Ya Fei and smiled to the unhappy Xun Er: "Did you know that the Primer Auction House came to our clan's Coming of Age Ceremony?"

Giving an evil stare to Xiao Yan who was acting as if nothing had happened, Xun Er emotionlessly said: "Xiao Clan and the Primer Auction House have always had a good relation so why is Ya Fei coming such a big deal? In addition, this woman's communication skills are confirmed incredible by all of Wu Tan City. A couple of young masters that befriended her for her beauty have spent an incredible amount of money on her but in the end, they got nothing. If Xiao Yao ge-ge wants to try to charm her then I can only say be careful. And, Xun Er won't lend you any money for those things."

Hearing that, Xiao Yan bitterly smiled: "Even if I'm thinking about those things, it requires that she, at the very least, acknowledges me. You do realize that she's at least 7 to 8 years older than me right?"

"Don't some women like that?" Xun Er seemingly smiled while saying that.

Dryly coughing, Xiao Yan could only admit defeat and not look at that circle of people again.

“Huh, why is she back?” Seeing that Xiao Yan wasn’t looking over there anymore, Xun Er stopped pursuing the point and after a brief moment of silence, she exclaimed out loud.

“Who?” After following Xun Er’s gaze, Xiao Yan’s brows slowly furrowed.

The gaze of the two pointed to a girl that was wearing a school uniform and was currently leaning on a tree. She had a sword equipped at her waist, was quite tall and the most striking feature were her long legs, legs that were so sexy that even Ya Fei’s legs paled in comparison to hers.

“Xiao Ye?” While staring at the tall girl, Xiao Yan asked: “Didn’t she go to Jia Nan Academy to train? Why did she come back?”

Xun Er cutely shrugged her shoulder while teasing: “Xiao Yan ge-ge, this time, you might have some trouble.”

Cracking open his mouth, Xiao Yan rubbed his burning forehead while saying: “This unruly woman is so annoying. Dammit, all I did was accidentally stumble into her bathing spot in the back mountains and accidentally touch her legs. She tried killing me for the majority of a year after that!”

TL: Killing is used in joking manner, it means like severe beating in this context

“Hehe, a girl’s body isn’t meant to be touched carelessly.” Hearing Xiao Yan’s story, Xun Er covered her mouth as she giggled. Suddenly, she remembered how Xiao Yan had helped her during the night and during that time, had contact with her body, causing a red blush to appear on her face.

Xiao Yan pursed his lips while coldly smiling: “That woman is Xiao Ning’s sister and they both aren’t good people. That bastard’s enmity towards me is partly due to her.”

Far away, Xiao Yu seemed to have sensed the two talking about her and

turned around to find Xiao Yan under another tree. After a slight shock, she furrowed her brows as distaste and disdain surfaced on her face.

After a pause, Xiao Yu moved her attractive long legs and started walking towards Xiao Yan.

Seeing Xiao Yu coming over, Xiao Yan's brows also furrowed as he showed his disgust and impatience.

"Ha, Xiao Yan, I never thought that I would see the day that you turn your situation around. It's really surprising." Coming closer, Xiao Yu saw Xiao Yan undisguised dislike towards her and sneered.

"None of your business."

Obviously, Xiao Yan wasn't too pleased with Xiao Yu and his normal calm had been abandoned with his vulgar words.

"Your words are still sharp and annoying as ever. Looks like the three years of abjection didn't smooth out your sharp vigor." Xiao Yu looked down upon Xiao Yan and said in a teaching tone.

This tone again... While letting out an annoyed breath in his mind, Xiao Yan looked down and closely examined this girl that he had not seen for almost an year. Moving his gaze to her legs, Xiao Yao touched his nose while asking: "Your legs are still that long. I wonder if another male touched them after that time."

Hearing that, Xiao Yu who was sneering, stopped, as her face darkened.

Chapter 38: This Brat Isn't Simple

Xiao Yan's words stabbed at Xiao Yu's weak spot and the later, in a fit, put her hand on her sword that was at her waist.

With a sneer, Xiao Yan leaned backwards and lazily said: "Do you want to fight?"

"So what!" Xiao Yu tightened her grip on her sword while trying desperately to stop her impulse to unsheathe it and start hacking Xiao Yan with it. With a sneer, she taunted: "Even if your talent has come back, why does it matter? Three years ago, I, Xiao Yu, could make you flee for your life and three years later, I can still do it."

Xiao Yan's brows jumped as he looked towards Xiao Yu's light purple school uniform where she had 3 gold stars on her chest. These stars represented Xiao Yu's strength, a three star Dou Zhe. Looks like her year in the academy wasn't wasted.

"Where are your filthy eyes looking?" Seeing where Xiao Yan was staring, Xiao Yu's already dark face become even darker.

"Aren't you wearing that so that people notice you?" Xiao Yan touched his nose. His words which were carelessly said, caused Xiao Yu to jump up in fury.

"Bastard!" Gnashing her teeth, Xiao Yu who was already at her limit finally pulled out her sword with a "Clang". Pointing her sword at Xiao Yan, she said: "Do you really think that I'm afraid to cut your tongue off?!"

Staring at the glittering steel sword in front of him, Xiao Yan didn't even blink when he said: "Why don't you try?"

While talking, Xiao Yan's right hand curled slightly as a pulsing vortex slowly formed. With 3 Xuan Level Dou Techniques, Xiao Yan wasn't too afraid of a 3-star Dou Zhe.

Watching the two who were about to come to blows, Xun Er, on the sidelines, helplessly shook her head. As she looked out into the distance, she smiled while alerting them: "Xiao shu-shu and them are coming."

Hearing Xun Er's words, Xiao Yu's brows furrowed and she turned her head to see Xiao Zhan hurrying over with an ugly face.

"Hmph, your good luck won't last."

After the cold hmpf, Xiao Yu returned her sword to its scabbard and turned around. Striding forward with her long legs, Xiao Yu paused before Xun Er, saying: "Xun Er biao-mei. Your talent and beauty are both top class but you should stay away from some people or else you might be stained with some bad habits. It would be too late for regrets then."

Towards Xiao Yu's tip, Xun Er smiled while saying: "Thanks for Xiao Yu biao-jie's reminder but Xun Er thinks that Xiao Yan ge-ge is great."

Hearing Xun Er's meaningful words, Xiao Yu's face changed colors as she scanned over the smiling Xun Er. Finally, Xiao Yu profoundly said: "Once you leave the clan, you'll know how big the world is. There are countless people that are much more talented than him, if you meet someone that makes your heart flutter, then..."

"Xiao Yu biao-jie, you're thinking too much. Xun Er doesn't believe that something like that will happen." Xun Er's red lips pursed as she interrupted Xiao Yu.

After being interrupted by Xun Er, Xiao Yu became embarrassed so she left after giving Xiao Yan one final evil stare.

Watching the angrily leaving Xiao Yu, Xiao Yan slowly let out a breath as his face full of disgust changed back into his normal, calm face. Sighing, he said: "I really don't like her."

Hearing that, Xun Er covered her mouth as she laughed: "Actually, I'm really curious as to why she always is going against Xiao Yan ge-ge. Even though you did accidentally stumble upon her bathing spot, she shouldn't be so against you right?"

"How should I know?" Xiao Yan innocently shrugged before looking towards Xiao Zhan and a couple more people walking towards him.

"Yan Er, are you alright? Where's Xiao Yu?" Quickly walking over and seeing the unharmed Xiao Yan, Xiao Zhan let out a breath as he asked.

Slightly shrugging, Xiao Yan laughed: "I'm fine. That woman just had blood rush to her head."

"You should avoid her a bit. That girl has a bad temper and now that's she's a 3 star Dou Zhe, if you guys fight, you'll be on the losing end. In addition, she's the first elder's granddaughter so I'm not in a good position to punish her if you guys fight." Xiao Zhan helplessly said.

Xiao Yan touched his nose as smiled without giving an answer.

"Here Yan Er, this is Primer Auction House's top auctioneer, misses Ya Fei. The Foundation Elixir from last time was brought through her." Xiao Zhan moved aside to show the red-dressed woman behind him as he introduced her.

Xiao Yan watched the beautiful woman that showed maturity with her actions and revealed a shy smile that was appropriate for his age: "Hi Ya Fei-jie."

TL: Jie means sister(can be used informal to mean some female slightly older than one)

With her attractive eyes latched on Xiao Yan, Ya Fei's beautiful face showed a smile because of his addressal. With her red lips moving, Ya Fei asked while smiling: "I heard that young master Xiao Yan raised 4 Duan Qi in just one year? Hehe, that training speed has become huge news in Wu Tan City, but is it real?"

Xiao Yan tilted his head and "shyly" said: "It's the result of father's purchase of the Foundation Elixir."

Hearing Xiao Yan's indirect admittance, even with Ya Fei's calm nature, she couldn't help but gasp. Curiosity and interest flashed across her eyes as she thought: 4 Duan Qi in just one year, that training speed, is frightening. As for that Foundation Elixir, I had personally examined it and naturally know the effects of it. It can help a bit with one's training speed but to raise 4 Duan Qi in just relying on it? Impossible!

Seeing that the two had a basic introduction, Xiao Zhan looked up into the sky and patted Xiao Yan's shoulder. With a smile, he said: "Alright, the

Coming of Age Ceremony is about to start and I have prepare some things. Don't let me down later."

Xiao Yan nodded while smiling.

Following Xiao Zhan, Ya Fei took a peek at Xiao Yan before she turned around. With a couple of years at the Auction House, she could discern even the smallest details and when she looked into the young man's eyes, she realized that even though the young man in front of her appeared shy, within his pitch black eyes, no emotions escaped. It was calm, like a secluded lake.

To be able to control his emotions at such a young age... This brat isn't simple... Turning around, that thought sounded within Ya Fei's mind.

Chapter 39: Ceremonial Test

The Coming of Age Ceremony had so many separate steps and was so complicated that it could make one's head start hurting.

Sitting below the platform, Xiao Yan watched the young man on the platform that was being led around like a doll. He couldn't help but rub his forehead as he said to Xun Er besides him: "This Coming of Age Ceremony. It's definitely a torture."

Watching Xiao Yan's sad face, Xun Er smiled while saying: "Can't help it; these are rules that were passed down since ancient times and even Xiao shu-shu wouldn't dare change them."

Xiao Yan sighed as he weakly nodded his head. Right when he was about to fall asleep, his brows jumped as he sensed that someone was looking at him. Narrowing his eyes, he looked at the left of the platform.

There stood Xiao Ning, full of envy while watching Xun Er and Xiao Yan. When he saw the later look over, he quickly raised his fist, aggressively.

"Idiot."

Lightly saying this word, Xiao Yan's sight moved slightly to the left, to Xiao Yu who was standing beside Xiao Ning. His eyes swept boldly across her long and sexy legs until her face turned green, before he finally looked away with a cold smile.

From the side, Xun Er was smiling to herself while watching Xiao Yan's antics, feeling a little helpless. When it came to Xiao Yu, Xiao Yan seemed to lose his usual calmness and always provoked her until she became completely mad.

Reclining on the cool wooden chair, Xiao Yan enjoyed the sweet scent of the maiden beside him, while waiting with his eyes closed.

When the Coming of Age Ceremony had progressed to about halfway, it was at last Xiao Yan's turn.

Upon hearing a shout from the stage, everyone on the guest platform looked at Xiao Yan with either curious or suspicious eyes. For most of

them, a large part of the reason as to why they were here at the Xiao Clan's coming of age ceremony was to have a look at the youth who had caused such an uproar in Wu Tan City and to see if he was as described in the rumours.

Xiao Yan slowly opened his eyes and the stares from all around made him feel like he was a monkey in the zoo, causing him to shake his head in resignation.

With a light sigh and a passive face, Xiao Yan stepped slowly onto the platform under the gazes of everyone.

The coming of age ceremony was held by the second elder Xiao Ying. Although the second elder never gave Xiao Yan any of his sympathy, he rarely went out of his way to harass Xiao Yan. In addition, ever since the day of the preliminary exam, he had mellowed quite a bit. At least, the scorn that was previously clearly presented on his face was no longer visible on the old wrinkled face.

With a complicated expression in his eyes, Xiao Ying heaved a sigh in his heart as he looked upon this youth who had overturned the tables in his life. His face shook a little as he took the materials that were needed for the ceremony before walking towards Xiao Yan.

Looking at the second elder walking towards him, Xiao Yan remembered the previous fussy and boring ceremony and had a migraine. With a bitter smile, he closed his eyes and awaited his fate.

.....

Under the eyes of everyone, Xiao Yan stood like an idiot for half an hour before the complex bureaucratic scene finally ended.

With a sigh of relief in his heart, Xiao Yan opened his eyes. Looking at the various spices surrounding his body, he rolled his eyes in gloom.

After all the complicated steps were over, the second elder wiped sweat off his brow and turned towards the black stone monument shouting: "Ceremonial Test!"

The Ceremonial Test was same as the previous month's test which was

just an preliminary test. The motive of the previous test was to let the clan's elites be picked out, so they could take the actual coming of age ceremony on the main stage, while the rest of the 7 Duan and below clan members would only have a simpler ceremony that was somewhat shabby

The Ceremonial Test was much more accurate compared to the preliminary test since this time, the test was personally checked by the two star Dou Grandmaster, second elder of Xiao Clan. It showed how serious the Coming of Age Ceremony was taken.

TL: Dou Zhe -> Dou Master -> Dou Grandmaster

With the second elder's shout, those who had been bored out of their minds suddenly focused as they sent their attention to the platform.

On the Guests Platform, nearly all of those sitting there also stared at the black clothed young man. The purpose for their visit today was to confirm if the young man that had stirred the entire Wu Tan City four years ago will stir Wu Tan City again.

Ignoring the burning gazes around him, Xiao Yan was calm as he walked up to the black monument.

While watching the calm Xiao Yan, the second elder's dry hand touched the Black Monument as a strand of his Dou Qi was pushed into it to test it. Afterwards, he stepped to the side and joined everyone else in staring Xiao Yan. Even though he was present at the previous testing, he couldn't help but wonder: Did this kid really get to 7 Duan Qi?

The shock of Xiao Yan's performance particularly impacted this second elder and he had especially asked to be in charge of the Coming of Age Ceremony so that he could make sure that he personally test Xiao Yan!

Disregarding the second elder's questioning gaze, Xiao Yan's hand slowly touched the black monument....

Watching Xiao Yan touch the monument, Xiao Yu couldn't help but furrow her brows while turning her head to whisper to Xiao Ning: "Did he really get to 7 Duan Qi?"

Because Xiao Yu had just gotten home two days ago after asking for a

break from the academy, she wasn't there to witness Xiao Yan's preliminary testing and thus was still suspicious about his achievements.

Being asked by his sister, Xiao Ning bitterly nodded while saying: "Yeah. That guy must have ate something that helped him jump 4 Duan Qi in just one year."

Having her question confirmed once more, Xiao Yu pushed her lips together while stomping her legs in annoyance. While angrily staring at the young man on the platform, her beautiful face showed her stubborn attitude as she thought: Without me actually seeing it, I won't believe that that cripple has turned his situation around.

Taking a deep breath, Xiao Yu sneered while saying: "That kid must have done something last time but with second elder examining it this time, I'll be..."

Before she could finish her thought, Xiao Yu's face tightened as the rest of the words became stuck in her throat.

On the high wooden platform, the huge black monument shined brightly as golden words appeared on the monument: "Dou Zi Qi: 8 Duan!"

Chapter 40: Shock

Silent, everyone was silent!

All eyes were blankly focused onto the golden words reflected on the black stone tablet above.

On the Guests' platform, the sharp clear ring of shattering tea cups falling to the ground resonated. The representatives from Wu Tan City were all dumbfounded, disbelief spread across their faces.

The purpose of their visit was to confirm whether the rumors were true or not: to see with their own eyes if Xiao Yan really did jump up 4 Duan Qi in the span of a year.

However, what they had just seen not only confirmed the rumours but had completely surpassed their expectations.

4 Duan Qi in a year? Now it turned into 5 Duan Qi... This training speed, it could only be described with a single word: Frightening!

"The Xiao Clan has succeeded once more..." Everyone on the Guests' platform couldn't help but mutter under their breath. To have a clan member that jumped 5 Duan Qi in a year, the Xiao Clan's future was looking bright.

"If this rate of growth continues, then perhaps...perhaps in 10 years, the Xiao Clan will have a Dou Huang ranked member." Everyone on the Guests' platform looked at each other as their hearts felt heavy at that thought.

Dou Huang: if any clan in the Jia Ma Empire had a strong Dou Huang, their status would skyrocket within the Jia Ma Empire. Even the three largest Clans in the Jia Ma Empire, the Primer Clan, Nalan Clan and Ritter Clan, would respect that clan. After all, there were only a handful of Dou Huang level Dou Zhes in the entire Jia Ma Empire. Each Dou Zhe who reached the Dou Huang rank had the power to topple over anything from the heavens to the oceans and to face ten thousands of enemies with ease. No sane empire would dare offend a Dou Huang without weighing the

consequences!

Three hundred years ago, Jia Ma Empire's sole Dou Huang Dou Zhe had his family killed as a result of a war. As a result, the Dou Huang single-handedly massacred the enemy's 10,000 elite knights in a fit of rage. Both empires were shaken in awe by the bloodshed caused.

Since that moment on, no empire on the Dou Qi Continent dared to offend a Dou Huang Dou Zhe. At the same time, everyone saw how scary Dou Huangs could be.

Therefore, everyone that saw Xiao Yan's gift looked at the Xiao Clan with an extreme envy.

At the center of the high platform, even Xiao Zhan was looking at the golden words on the monument with his eyes slightly sour. After a while, he let out a lengthy breath and viewed his black clothed son with a look of gratitude., "The best decision in my life was to not create uneasiness between Yan Er and me..."

As Xiao Yan's father, Xiao Zhan was well aware of his son's temperament. He could still clearly remember that in Xiao Yan's childhood, not long after his birth, how indifferent his son was to him. Xiao Yan would always look at him with a cold look, as if he were looking at a stranger and not his father.

Fortunately, over the years, the cold and detached looks toward Xiao Zhan grew warm, as Xiao Zhan's care and love...

Thinking back to the time when Xiao Yan was a child, Xiao Zhan shivered. His mouth twitched while a gentle smile took over his face.

"Xiao Clan Leader, young master Xiao Yan's talent is truly mind blowing! This time the Xiao Clan will definitely have an amazingly terrifying Dou Zhe." Standing by Xiao Zhan's side, Ya Fei's beautiful eyes gazed at the very same person Xiao Zhan was looking at. Her face was still slightly red from her excitement while she said her thoughts.

Xiao Zhan laughed loudly, pride and excitement clearly showing on his face. He cupped his hands together and with a courteous look to Ya Fei, he

replied, “Ya Fei, that kid’s talent is sometimes a huge surprise but at other times, a huge letdown. You also know of how he fell from the spotlight three years ago and faced countless hardships. No one would have thought that he would regain his talent but here it is again...sigh!”

Ya Fei’s eyebrows bent slightly with her feminine smile. Whether Xiao Yan’s talent was short lived or not, she didn’t know. Right now, the only thing that mattered to her was his potential, which would be enough for her.

Giving an enchanting look downwards, Ya Fei’s heart had already formed a plan. In the future, she would be sure to come and do business with the Xiao Clan as much as possible!

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Beneath the ceremonial platform, Xiao Yu opened her mouth with a stiff face. She stared at the Black Monument in shock while breathing heavily. Suddenly she snapped at Xiao Ning: “Didn’t you say that he was 7 Duan Qi? How is he higher?”

Xiao Ning’s opened mouth a couple of times before he mumbled innocently, “Last month he was already 7 Duan.... This month, he, seems to have had a breakthrough?”

“To go from 7 Duan to 8 Duan in one month... How is that possible? Even if that brat got his old talent back, he wouldn’t be able to train this fast!” Xiao Yu exclaimed. “To jump 5 Duan in a year? The little brat should die dammit! This kind of speed can rival that monster woman in Jianan Academy.”

“How would I know...” Xiao Ning gave a bitter smile as he glanced at the far away Xun Er, only to see her gaze fixed on Xiao Yan below with eyes of admiration and didn’t pay attention to him at all.

“F**king bastard!”

After being ignored by the girl he favored over all others, Xiao Ning’s heart blazed with the fires of jealousy. Raising his head, he threw a ferocious glare at Xiao Yan that contrasted with his youthful face.

Chapter 41: Qi Increasing Powder

“Second Elder, is the test over yet?”

Xiao Yan softly inquired as he looked at the golden words on the Monument. He slowly removed his hand while looking at the distracted Second Elder.

“Oh, eh, the test is over...” The Second Elder snapped out of his confusion after hearing Xiao Yan’s voice. He frantically nodded his head, though his eyes were still drifting here and there. The Elder was obviously still in a state of shock.

Ah, to raise 5 Duan Qi in a year? What a fast progression... truly terrifying. The second Elder was still lost in thought and looked at the youth before him with complex emotions. However, the doubt that was in his old eyes disappeared in the face of reality.

The golden words gradually faded from the Monument and it returned to a deep black hue.

Even though the golden words had dissipated, the audience remained quite still. Everyone was still absorbed in shock.

“Ahem.....” On the high platform, the second elder let out a cough and finally he got the audience’s attention back.

“The Ceremonial Test has been completed. In accordance with the rules, Xiao Yan will accept a single challenge. Those below Dou Zhe rank will be allowed to challenge him, who will come forward?” The second Elder shouted as his eyes swept over the younger generation.

If one were to consider the Coming of Age ceremony as a test of how high one’s Dou Qi was, then the challenge was an examination of one’s Dou Technique proficiency. Ultimately, in a fight of life and death, Dou Techniques would be an influential factor in determining the outcome. Each clan’s attention to the proficiency of Dou Techniques was no less than their attention to the Dou Qi of a Dou Zhe.

Upon hearing the Second Elder’s declaration, a mild clamour broke out

in the audience. The younger Xiao generation looked at each other while cowardice tightened their lips. The golden words on the Black Monument, 8 Duan Qi, had torn any thought dwelling in their heart of easy victory to pieces.

At the moment, they had not the qualification to boast of their strength in combat with Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan was silently standing on the platform and calmly swept his gaze down over his peers. Each time his eyes rested on a youth, he or she would quickly step back.

“Hmph, a bunch of cowards!” Looking at the surrounding clan members, cowering in fear, Xiao Ning scolded in derision. He lifted his head and looked challengingly at the black clad youth on stage and was about to step on stage when a slender hand pulled him back.

With a furrow of his brow, Xiao Ning looked at his sister and said unhappily: “What?”

Xiao Yu sighed and replied : “He’s at 8 Duan Qi, you might not be able to beat him.”

Xiao Ning’s mouth twitched slightly, he hesitated as well. But when his eyes drifted towards the nearby Xun-Er, what greeted him was the sight of her gazing warmly at Xiao Yan with a delicate pleasant expression that had never been directed at him...

Gritting his teeth savagely, Xiao Ning shrugged off Xiao Yu’s hand with jealousy and anger surfacing on his still somewhat childish face. “So what! It has already been more than 1 year since I’ve reached 8 Duan Qi, do you think I can’t beat him, who just reached 8 Duan Qi?”

Looking at Xiao Ning, whose face was filled with stubbornness and jealousy, Xiao Yu knew she had no choice. After pausing a while, she took out a green pill and stroked it gently with a hint of reluctance, before shoving it into Xiao Ning’s hands. She whispered: “This is a tier 2 pill, ‘Qi Increasing Powder’, which grants the power of a Dou Zhe for a short period of time. However, the consequence is that if consumed, one will be bedridden for the next month. Do not use it unless absolutely necessary.”

Upon hearing that, Xiao Ning grasped the pill joyously, saying “With this, I will definitely teach that guy a lesson!”

Xiao Ning frowned and warned him “Don’t be too reckless. Let him suffer just a little. You must not injure him heavily or else even Grandfather will not be able to protect you. The current ‘him’ is no longer the useless cripple of the past.”

“Yes yes, I already know...” Xiao Ning said indifferently, nodding slightly. With a wry smile he looked at Xun-Er, proudly saying in his heart, I will let you know, that guy is only a pillow with an embroidered case!

TL: Chinese Proverb – an outwardly attractive but worthless person

With a cold smile, Xiao Ning brushed off Xiao Yu’s hand and jumped onto the stage, shouting “I’ll challenge you!”

Upon hearing that, everyone’s gaze turned towards Xiao Ning and the feeling of being the center of attention made the proud look on his face increase further.

Looking at Xiao Ning who was walking over, the second Elder’s brows furrowed. Looking up at the guests seats, he saw as expected the first Elder with a troubled look on his face. Sighing lightly, he rebuked in his heart: Ignorant fool! Do you still think that Xiao Yan is still the useless cripple he was in the past?

Xiao Ning did not notice the frown on the second Elder’s face and taking a big step forward he arrogantly grinned : “Xiao Yan, let me test your fighting prowess.”

Looking up lazily to see Xiao Ning in front of him, Xiao Yan did not even bother replying.

Seeing that Xiao Ning had already reached the center of the stage, the second Elder had no choice but to loudly proclaim : “Xiao Yan has been challenged by Xiao Ning. Xiao Yan, do you accept the challenge?”

“You won’t run from my challenge will you? Xun Er is watching, you had better not disappoint her...” Caressing the pill hidden in his sleeve, Xiao Ning’s confidence swelled and with a look at the beautiful, calm maiden

below, he said to Xiao Yan with a cold smile.

Idiot... Xiao Yan muttered in his heart, brushing his nose. In front of everyone, he nodded and calmly said: "I accept."

Seeing Xiao Yan nod, the second elder sighed once more and waved his hand. As he retreated off the stage, he lowered his voice to a volume where only the two of them could hear and said "Remember, control your strength. Do not injure each other!"

Xiao Ning curled his lip while Xiao Yan, shrugged indifferently.

As the second Elder left the stage, the air atop it grew strained. A fight was soon to arise.

Chapter 42: You Lost

With the announcement, everyone's gaze turned to the two youths on the platform in interest. Everyone was curious about this youth who had created yet another miracle after 3 years. Did he have in Dou techniques the same talent he had in Dou Qi cultivation? Did he have that same terrifying speed of learning?

On the Guest Platform, Xiao Zhan furrowed his brows as he looked at Xiao Yan on stage with a slightly uneasy expression on his face. Although Xiao Yan's Dou Qi had progressed beyond Xiao Zhan's expectations, he had never seen Xiao Yan go to the Dou Technique Hall and look for a Dou Technique, nor did he ever see him train in Dou Techniques at all.

One should note that Dou Technique training differed from Dou Qi training. If one were to learn a low Huang level Dou Technique, all that was required was one's own hard work – grasped simply through trial and error. A mid or even high level technique, however, would require much more: it needed personal instruction from a Clan Technique Instructor. Over the past years, Xiao Zhan had never heard of Xiao Yan approaching any of the clan's instructors to learn Dou Techniques. On the other hand, Xiao Ning regularly patronized them to learn the techniques.

To Xiao Zhan's understanding, the 8 Duan Xiao Ning had already mastered three mid and one high Huang level Dou Technique. Any one of those techniques would place him one step ahead of any combatant in the same tier. It seemed to him that Xiao Yan would be at a disadvantage in this battle.

"Haha. Xiao Clan Leader, what would you say? Is victory possible for the young master, Xiao Yan?" Next to Xiao Zhan, Ya Fei, whose eyes were firmly fixed on the stands, asked with a soft smile.

Xiao Zhan calmed his anger towards Xiao Ning and calmly said: "Yan-er isn't very proficient with Dou Techniques at the moment. Furthermore he has just reached 8 Duan, while Xiao Ning has reached that stage for over a year. It is unfortunate but I am afraid that the likelihood of my son

winning will not be very high.”

“Oh, really?” Ya Fei slowly batted her long eyelashes, her alluring eyes sweeping about as she gazed lazily at the calm, black clothed youth on the stage. Her lips curved up in a small smile, giving her countenance a mature beauty, as she said: “I don’t know why but I’m very confident in young master Xiao Yan. I think he can claim victory in this fight.”

Xiao Zhan was taken aback, rather, surprised at her confidence. He paused for a moment before smiling and shaking his head: “Let’s hope Miss Ya Fei’s words come true.”

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Facing the still standing Xiao Yan, Xiao Ning sneered and clenched his two fists as he took an aggressive stance. His faint Dou Qi coursed through him as he dashed forward, giving him an even more menacing look.

Not a word more was uttered; Xiao Ning’s foot burst off from the ground bringing himself close to Xiao Yan. And, without a moment’s hesitation, Xiao Ning brought his 2 fists together: each of his fingernails gleamed like metal

Standing there, less than half a meter away from Xiao Yan, Xiao Ning paused. His right hand took the shape of a claw and swerved towards Xiao Yan neck. “Middle Huang Level Dou Technique: Rending Claws!”

Xiao Yan looked at the nearing the claws with indifference. He slowly brought up a single palm curved inwards and suddenly straightened it, causing a huge pushing force...

Feeling the tremendous pressure of Dou Qi, Xiao Ning’s face dropped as if he had been physically beaten. He then staggered back 10 steps before stopping himself.

There, watching from the terrace above, Xiao Zhan gazed down with astonishment. By his side, Ya Fei smiled sweetly. She watched intently, her red lips were softly pressed against her white jade teacup, slowly sipping tea.

"This boy... he's really a hidden treasure.." Ya Fei mused, her charming lips sipping from her cup once more.

"What... what Dou Technique is this?" Xiao Ning said while rubbing the sore spot on his chest, his face paling as he asked.

Xiao Yan glanced at him coolly before lowering his head. The name of "Fire Palm" was quite tasteless but the technique could unleash quite a powerful force, which pleased Xiao Yan.

Xiao Ning's face trembled in rage seeing Xiao Yan ignore him; his jaws clamped shut as he charged once more towards Xiao Yan.

With palms stretched outwards, Xiao Yan narrowed his eyes at the encroaching Xiao Ning and let his mouth twist into a cruel smirk.

His right hand uncoiled slowly then closed abruptly. A violent force of attraction came forth from his palm. Xuan Level Dou Technique: Vacuum Hands!

Seeing Xiao Yan's hand close, Xiao Ning subconsciously planted his feet more firmly into the ground. However, the strength used was insufficient. He felt himself drawn in and was sent towards the fist.

Xiao Ning's body flew in an arc towards Xiao Yan who had a strange smile engraved on his face.

Although Xiao Ning's body was being pulled, he couldn't help but smirk as he drew closer and closer. He gave a foreboding laugh as Dou Qi began to condense in his fists.

"Iron Fists!" Xiao Ning cried out with fists clenched tight. A sharp burst of Qi escaped outwards creating a deep echo that resonated in midair. If he could hit Xiao Yan's shoulder, he would do terrifying damage to his arm. It seemed to Xiao Ning that Xiao Yan did not take the possibility of counter-attack into account.

Iron Fists: a High Huang level Dou Technique with a decent amount of power. It required a Dou Qi of at least 7 Duan to be able to learn and practice.

Squinting slightly after feeling the sharp Qi in the air, Xiao Yan let out a breath of air slowly. Channeling the Dou Qi throughout his body, he exclaimed inwardly, “Xun Level Dou Technique: Fire Palm!”

Thinking loudly with conviction, Xiao Yan blasted out a wave of Qi from his palm.

“Bang!” The atmosphere grew heavy as an unseen force ruthlessly pushed back the flying figure of Xiao Ning. The attractive and repulsive force on Xiao Ning immediately turned his face ashen white.

“Pu-chi.”

The two forces battled against each other, bringing about a brief stalemate. In the end, Xiao Ning was ultimately sent flying back, falling onto the ground 10 meters away. His body shook on the ground as he slowly spat out blood from his mouth with a pitiful groan from him following.

Looking at Xiao Ning who had become completely paralyzed and then calmly glancing around, Xiao Yan slowly put his hand down and quietly spoke: “You lost...”

Chapter 43: The Powerful Xiao Yan

Looking at Xiao Ning directly without saying anything, Xiao Yan quietly walked off the stage. Quickly, a loud chatter arose from the audience, who was still not completely over the previous shock; their heart slowly began to churn quickly once more.

The younger Xiao Clan generation were all dumbstruck as they looked to Xiao Ning who was vomiting blood. As peers, they were naturally aware of Xiao Ning's fighting capabilities. In the youngest generation of the Xiao Clan, aside of Xun Er, very few could rival Xiao Ning. However at this moment, he was utterly defeated by Xiao Yan. This unforeseen result had happened so suddenly, catching everyone unprepared.

In the audience, Xiao Yu looked at the quickly defeated Xiao Ning, her pretty cheeks showing a faint red hue as her mouth gaped open at the incredible sight, even her heart was in shock.

After a while, Xiao Yu slowly recovered her composure, her slender white neck regaining its natural rosy color. She murmured softly under her breath, "This scoundrel, how did he get so strong? How could he have time to practice new Dou Techniques while bitterly trying to regain his original Dou Qi?"

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"Hehe, not only is young master Xiao Yan's Dou Qi quite powerful his Dou Techniques are also very well practiced. Xiao Clan Leader must have spent a lot of time on him?" In the Guest Platform, although Ya Fei was mentally prepared from the start, she was shocked by Xiao Yan's performance. She seductively flashed her eyes as she faced Xiao Zhan who smiled widely.

If one wanted to learn deep Dou Techniques then one needed to have an instructor who knew the tricks to that Dou Technique. It would seem that Ya Fei believed that Xiao Zhan had taught Xiao Yan in private.

Hearing what Ya Fei said earlier, Xiao Zhan laughed bitterly, shaking his head. It wasn't that he didn't want to teach Xiao Yan Dou Ji, he couldn't

have possibly teach Xiao Yan such interesting Dou Techniques. Even with his understanding of the Dou Techniques in Xiao Clan, he had never seen a Dou Technique like that.

Therefore Xiao Zhan could only come to one conclusion, the Dou Technique Xiao Yan used was not from Xiao clan.

Since that isn't a Dou Technique from our clan, where did Xiao Yan learn it from? Xiao Zhan had his suspicions and looked towards the various experts in the clan, searching for answers. But all he saw were somewhat strange looks that they were aimed at him.

Looking at the gazes on their faces, Xiao Zhan stared blankly and before realizing what the glances zed meant: they thought that he helped Yan Er!

Curling his lips, Xiao Zhan did not feel like giving an explanation and returned his gaze to his son. "This brat, he certainly has no shortage of secrets." He murmured to himself.

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There on the stage, remained the still collapsed form of Xiao Ning. The second elder shook his head helplessly in shock and studied Xiao Yan with a complex look.

The young man bowed his head briefly, his delicate but young face had a tranquil look. No traces of pride or arrogance had appeared on his face, even after his victory.

Letting out a sigh, the second elder raised a dry palm high and was about to loudly proclaim that the match was over when his face suddenly turned to the left.

In the distance, Xiao Ning, who was laying on the ground earlier, suddenly leapt up like a jaguar. His faint Dou Qi dramatically rose as his feet stamped firmly onto the wooden stage floor. Dashing forward, each time his foot landed on the stage, wood splinters would jump up from the stage

Both his cold eyes focused once more on Xiao Yan and his bloodstained mouth and face turned even more malevolent than before. "You bastard.

Time for you to go to hell!"

"Xiao Ning, stop!"

The sudden event left the second elder distracted but he immediately shouted out. However, at this moment, Xiao Ning's mind was filled with only rage and hatred, he turned a deaf ear to the second elder. Taking advantage of the Tier 2 "Qi Increasing Powder", he gnashed his teeth together in fury while glaring at Xiao Yan, and immediately rushed in to attack.

The sudden change on the field caused a disturbance amongst the audience. On the Guest terrace, Xiao Zhan and the people around him were able to detect what had just happened; Xiao Ning now had the strength of an Dou Zi!

"He took 'Qi Gathering Powder'!" The knowledgeable Ya Fei exclaimed after she saw the sudden sharp rise in strength of Xiao Ning, her charming face changed as she spoke.

"You scoundrel!" Xiao Zhan's expression turned bleak. He slammed his hands against the table, hairline fractures radiated outwards from the impact. With a fierce look, he glared at the first elder, "You old prune, if something happens to my son then even your own grandson's life won't be enough compensation!"

At the moment, Xiao Yan possessed far more potential than Xiao Ning. If Yan Er suffered a serious injury in the match because of Xiao Ning's violation of the rules, even with Xiao Ning's support from the first elder, the clan would not easily let him off.

As Xiao Zhan glared at the first elder, the first elder's wrinkled face started trembling. He began to stutter. If Xiao Yan was the same weak Xiao Yan from before, then a serious injury wouldn't mean much. But now... the clan would even turn their back on the first elder before giving up this person who had the possibility of become a Dou Huang!

The second elder's cry had no effect; Xiao Ning was already an arm's length away from Xiao Yan, and his hands were covered with a thick layer of Dou Qi as he roared "Iron Mountain Fists!".

With the increase in power, this time, the Iron Mountain Fists sent out a huge shockwave, far larger than the one before.

The force blew back Xiao Yan's hair, revealing a pair of calm but cold black eyes.

Facing Xiao Ning's strike, Xiao Yan unexpectedly did not step back. He clenched his right hand and slowly got into a stance. Then, after a brief pause, he shot forward like an arrow off a bowstring.

The second elder stomped his foot in anger when he saw Xiao Yan meet head on with the incoming Xiao Ning and yelled out in frustration, "Idiot!"

"Octane Blast!"

Giving a suppressed shout in his mind, Xiao Yan's fist collided with Xiao Ning's under the horrified gaze of the second elder.

"Bang!" The two fists met midair. Suddenly, Xiao Ning's twisted face began to turn deathly pale. Once again blood began to spill from his mouth, staining his face.

With an apathetic look on his face, Xiao Yan's sleeves fluttered as he delivered another punch at Xiao Ning, smashing him out of the field like a leaf in a gale.

Seeing this scene, the second elder on the platform suddenly squinted his eyes. He could not help but flatly inhale a cold breath. From that moment on, watching the backline of the young man in black, he seemed to become mysterious.

Chapter 44: You Want To Test Me?

Seeing Xiao Ning, who seemed as if he were teetering on the edge of life and death, the audience went silent once more.

The audience members' eyes gazed at the young man still standing on the field, as if he were the devil himself. No one was completely sure about what had just happened; they all saw Xiao Ning suddenly gain a boost in strength and then saw him quickly defeated. They were not expecting to see Xiao Ning, after a boost in power, to suffer an even more humiliating defeat with a serious injury from one punch!

Looking at the field from the Guest platform, Ya Fei's pearly white hands covered her red lips, her ample breasts moved as her whole body shook in excitement.

What a strong Dou Technique... What level could it be? Xuan level? How is that possible? Ya Fei gasped, her heart fluttered as she gave the possibility some thought. Xuan level Dou Techniques were not only rare but also difficult to learn.

After a while, Ya Fei was slowly brought back to reality. Once more turning her thoughts toward Xiao Yan's previous of Dou Technique, her brow furrowed as she thought of something: If I remember correctly, the Xiao Clan's highest Dou Technique is a Xuan Level Technique Fissure of the Lion that goes with the Xuan Level Qi Method Raging Lion. Right?

Based on what I saw, that Dou Technique was definitely not 'Fissure of the Lion.' Hmm..." Ya Fei stared down at her jade teacup resting gently in her lily white hands. Out of nowhere a thought occurred to her: Could it be... that that Dou Technique, was not taught to him by Xiao Zhan?

Her beautiful eyes lazily fluttered as she glanced over at Xiao Zhan with an inconspicuous tilt of her head. While looking, she was able to catch the momentary shock on Xiao Zhan's face as he also realized that the technique was not a clan technique

If Xiao Zhan didn't teach him..." Ya Fei mused, her well-developed chest leaning downwards as her jade fingernails wrapped around her teacup. As

she recalled the proficiency Xiao Yan displayed with those Dou Techniques, she couldn't help but to inwardly think: Then this brat... he has a mysterious teacher that teaches him behind his clan's back? Otherwise, a Xuan Level Dou Techniques can't be mastered that quickly through trial and error with so little experience.

To be able to teach Xuan level Dou Techniques... that mysterious man's strength must be at the Dou Ling stage! We have to investigate this matter! Ya Fei considered, as she gracefully put down her jade teacup after wiping a bead of cold sweat from her cheek. Observing Xiao Yan closely, she thought, This little brat... he gets more mysterious with each passing day. I can't help but be curious.

TL: Dou Ling is the level above Da Dou Shi which is where Xiao Yan's father is at

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Oh Dear...this Yan Er of mine, he's harder and harder to see through. Beside Ya Fei, Xiao Zhan couldn't help but sigh silently. His son's execution of the previous Dou Technique was so well done that he silently cheered when he saw that. From an damage point of view, that Dou Technique was on par with Xiao Clan's Xuan Level Dou Technique "Fissure of the Lion!"

Slowly shaking his head, Xiao Zhan exhaled deeply. With a sad look, he thought, I'm afraid that there is someone teaching Yan Er behind my back.

But who is teaching him? Xiao Zhan answered while scratching his chin. He couldn't help but look to the far away Xun Er. At this moment, the little girl was resting her cheeks on her hands, a faint smile on her face as she looked at Xiao Yan standing in the limelight.

Could it be her? A seed of curiosity was planted into his mind. Thinking about how close Xun Er and Xiao Yan were, Xiao Zhan forcibly justified that thought.

.....

On the stage, Xiao Yan let out a breath of stale air as his rock hard arms

slowly reverted back to their original state. Even his sleeves were beginning to slowly fall down and back into silky smooth fabric.

Twisting his head, Xiao Yan turned to face Xiao Yu, who was rushing forward and picking up the unconscious Xiao Ning. Xiao Yan looked on with indifference and his heart didn't have the slightest sliver of pity. If he had not learned two Xuan level Dou Techniques, then his own right hand would have been broken by Xiao Ning's attack. Since others did not show mercy to him then he would have no reason to be an idiotic good person.

Putting his hands back into his pockets, Xiao Yan walked past the dumbstruck second elder, asking "The battle has ended, right?"

Gulping, the second elder regained his senses and nodded once. As he started to announce that the battle is over, he was interrupted.

"Hold it!" Under the platform, Xiao Yu was carrying a blood-covered Xiao Ning. Her voice brimming with hatred.

The second elder creased his eyebrows, "Xiao Yu, what do you want?"

Handing the unconscious Xiao Ning to another clan member, Xiao Yu leaped onto the platform vigorously. The grudge she held against Xiao Yan could clearly be seen, "Xiao Ning is your older cousin, how could you beat him up so viciously?"

Hearing Xiao Yu's questioning, Xiao Yan sneered while a vicious smile appeared on his face, "Although this was only supposed to be a challenge, he violated the rules. After losing once, he ingested Qi Gathering Powder and attacked me in that powered-up state. Do you really think he showed me mercy? If I didn't resist, would you be furious because I'm hurt? Is Xiao Ning a human while I, Xiao Yan am not? Xiao Yu, aside from being biased against me, what else are you capable of doing?"

Being bombarded with questions like firecrackers on rope, Xiao Yu's mind grew sluggish. Her pretty red cheeks turned white then quickly flamed red in anger. With her arrogant attitude, she was never lectured in public before. As she exhaled to calm her anger, she stated coldly, "I don't care for your talk, I only know that you have wounded my younger brother. So now, I challenge you! If you have the skills, then accept my

challenge!"

"Xiao Yu, withdraw your challenge, this is not your place! This is a competition for those under the level of Dou Zhe, you don't qualify!" The second elder chided out from the side.

Xiao Yu refused to back down. She bit her lip in anger while glaring at Xiao Yan, "Don't tell me you don't dare accept."

This idiotic woman.

Inwardly fuming, Xiao Yan cursed in rage, his first battle with Xiao Ning had already used up a lot of his Dou Qi and now he was going to be battling with a 3 star Dou Zhe. He was clearly at a disadvantage.

"Don't have the guts to accept a challenge from a woman?" Staring coldly at Xiao Yan, Xiao Yu felt a hint glee and openly sneered at him.

Brushing his nose with his thumb, Xiao Yan's mouth twitched slightly and his black pupils shimmered ominously.

As Xiao Yan began to prepare himself to beat the long legged woman, a silver bell like laugh sounded as someone softly floated onto the platform.

Suddenly, a voice was heard calling from the platform, "Cousin Xiao Yu, brother Xiao Yan is already tired and yet you're still challenging him. Are you trying to take advantage of him? Cousin Xiao Yu, if you really want to fight someone, then why don't you let Xun Er play with you?"

Chapter 45: The Finale

With everyone's gaze on her, the young girl jumped onto the high platform landing beside Xiao Yan. Her beautiful eyes moved gently while her pretty red lips stretched into an elegant smile.

Seeing Xun Er jump up, Xiao Yan rolled his eyes helplessly and asked, "Why did you have to run over here?"

Xun Er formed a slight smile. Not answering, her eyes glanced over to Xiao Yu, whose face now had a complex look. With a smile, Xun Er said: "Xiao Yu Biao-jie, in comparison to Xiao Yan, your age is a bit older and you even went to Jia Nan Academy to train. Under these conditions, the challenge is a bit unreasonable. If Xiao Yu Biao-jie needs someone to relieve stress then Xun Er will happily help you."

Hearing this Xiao Yu's charming face became heavy while her eyebrows wrinkled. Looking at Xiao Yan with cutting eyes she sneered and said: "Don't tell me, you only know how to hide behind a woman?"

Xiao Yan's eyebrows twitched. In his eyes an ominous glint appeared. At that moment, he just wanted to hold this woman to the ground and humiliate her.

"Enough!" While the three were arguing, the second elder let out an angry shout, making the three of them swallow all the words they wanted to say.

With a gloomy expression, the angered second elder walked towards them. Turning to Xiao Yu he shouted angrily: "On this stage, you do not have the right to challenge anyone. Return immediately. If you obstruct the ongoing ceremony anymore, you will be forced to stay within your house for a month!"

After venting his anger on Xiao Yu, the Second Elder let out a sigh of relief. Turning his head, he helplessly watched Xun Er, who was twirling a strand of her fine black hair as he forced a smile: "Young miss Xun Er, you should also go down. Your challenge is also against the rules."

Xun Er shrugged indifferently. Nodding her delicate chin, she turned around to leave the stage. Then, she turned back to Xiao Yan and quietly pulled a weird face leaving him unsure of whether to laugh or cry.

To be angrily rebuked by the second elder, biting her red lips, the charming Xiao Yu felt wronged. After a short while, she stamped her feet a few times then gave a sneer before leaving: "Little scoundrel, just you wait!"

Looking at the comical ending, the second elder released a long sigh. Turning his head around, he looked at the perpetrator who wore an innocent face. Forcing a small smile, the second elder stood on the stage and with a voice as cold as ice, he shouted: "Xiao Ning illegally took a pill, therefore from today on he will be locked indoors for 3 months!" After the elder finished speaking, whispers erupted. He shouted once more: "The challenge has ended; Xiao Yan has won!"

Regarding the unneeded explanation of what occurred, Xiao Yan actually did not express an opinion. After hearing the declaration of the end of the Coming of Age ceremony, he walked down from the platform.

All the members of the audience, in the stands, stared at the young man. Looking back at the fearful eyes of his clansmen, Xiao Yan brushed his nose laughing inwardly.

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After Xiao Yan's ceremony had ended, various clansmen went onstage. However, under the shadow of Xiao Yan's performance, the other clansman's achievements dimmed.

Finally, Xun Er appeared on stage and caused quite a large commotion. A 15 years old Dou Zhe, this achievement was just shy of Xiao Yan's past achievement. Although Xun Er's achievement still quite remarkable, many attending the ceremony knew that she was the clan's brightest pearl. Therefore, even though they were still shocked, they were much less surprised compared to their shock at the end of Xiao Yan's performance.

The Coming of Age Ceremony lasted from early morning until afternoon. In the end, the field was filled with sounds of admiration before

emptying quickly. However, distraught pairs of eyes kept on staring at the youth in the black garment who just made a miracle come true.

Looking at the end of the Coming of Age Ceremony, Xiao Yan let out a silent sigh. All these stares were unbearable for him. Shaking his head, he stood up to walk away.

“Today, Xiao Yan ge-ge’s display really made people gasp in amazement.” A fragrant smell arrived nearby and Xun Er’s gentle laughter silver bell-like laughter washed over Xiao Yan.

Touching his nose Xiao Yan began to laugh.

“Originally, I also believed that Xiao Yan ge-ge didn’t know any Dou Techniques but who would have thought that you hid them so well.” Carrying her delicate hands behind her back, Xun Er followed behind Xiao Yan while tilting her head slightly to the side. Her smile was full of emotions

“Haha, I’m nowhere near as secretive as you, Xun Er. Last time at the Dou Technique hall, that Dou Technique wasn’t too common either.” The corners of Xiao Yan’s mouth arched up as he turned around and spoke.

Hearing that, Xun Er paused. Her beautiful eyes formed crescent moons as she laughed loudly and said: “Xiao Yan ge-ge’s knowledge is really balance. If you are really interested in those Dou Techniques then Xun Er can teach you.....”

Shrugging his shoulders, Xiao Yan shook his head and said: “It’s fine. To bite off more than I can chew will not help. This is something I understand clearly.”

“How about.....Qi Methods?” Xiao Yan’s refusal was unexpected for Xun Er but her black and intelligent eyes rolled before she got an idea.

Stopping, Xiao Yan squinted and said ambiguously: “ Won’t we be able to go into the Qi Method Hall to look for Qi Methods in 5 days?.....”

“The Xiao clan’s highest technique is just a Xuan middle level, Raging Lion. Moreover, Xiao Yan isn’t qualified to practice it.” Xun Er used her small hand to push a strand of her fine black hair aside. She pursed her

tiny mouth and she seemed like she was choosing her words carefully. A moment later, she spoke softly: "Xun Er could try to get a high level Xuan Qi Method for Xiao Yan ge-ge.....how about it?"

This girl.....is really wealthy. High Xuan level.....at the very least it would cost a couple hundred thousand. Sighing inwardly, Xiao Yan forced a smile. If he hadn't coincidentally met with Yao Lao, perhaps it would have been quite difficult for him to bridge the gap between Xun Er and him. Even if his innate talent was not lacking, just Xun Er's mysterious background was something that he could not imagine.

He secretly stroked the simple and unadorned ring. Calm filled his heart as he knew that the ring would be his secret to become strong again.

Looking down at Xun Er, Xiao Yan laughed. Shaking his head slightly, his soft voice held a stubborn attachment: "No need. This ge will depend on his own strength to become strong."

TL: Ge - Brother

Xun Er stopped. Blinking her sharp eyes, she stared at Xiao Yan's unstopping back. Shortly after, she suddenly smiled: It seems..... in the end, Xiao Yan ge-ge, you really have a mysterious person behind you. Yeah.....Do I need to check it?

With a somewhat pensive look she brought a finger to her forehead. After standing still for a while, Xun Er helplessly shook her head. Best to leave him alone. Brother Xiao Yan hates it when others try to meddle. Since this mysterious teacher has taught him that much, he probably will not harm brother

Chapter 46: The Enraged Xiao Yan

After the Coming of Age Ceremony, Xiao Yan could finally take a breather. His days, which were usually jam-packed with training, became relaxed.

Though the ingredients he had previously bought for the Foundation Elixir were almost exhausted, Xiao Yan did not consider buying any more. The him right now had finally stepped into the 8th Duan Qi and on this level the benefits of the Foundation Elixir were next to nothing.

Now even though the Foundation Elixir had lost its use, Yao Lao refrained from replacing it with a new one. Instead, he told Xiao Yan to use this period of time to relax and calm his mental state. The true way of training is to train in bouts and take a break between them. Training yourself to death might backfire and lead one down the wrong path.

During these relaxed and happy days, Xiao Yan, who was used to toiling everyday, felt bored to death but he had no choice in the matter. Everyday, he would only accompany Xun Er to roam about the city. However, sometimes he would go behind the mountains to train his Dou Techniques.

The current Xiao Yan had undoubtedly become the focus of the Xiao family. Wherever he went, gazes of reverence stuck to him like shadows. And the few respectful greetings here and there made Xiao Yan wonder at the difference in treatment before and after his display.

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“Peng!”

In the thick and lush forest of the back mountains, a strong looking monkey-like shadow dodged and jumped with unbelievable speed. It moved through the forest quickly and nimbly, dodging all obstacles in its path. Then, with a heavy thud, a punch containing Qi and ferocious strength cracked a tree trunk that was at least 2-3 metres wide. The crack on the tree spread out continuously, and at last, with a “Bang!”, the tree snapped in half.

Nimbly avoiding the falling tree, Xiao Yan jumped on top of a rock. He aimed his right hand towards his clothes which were hanging on the fallen tree and a spiral of force suddenly appeared, pulling the clothes towards his palm.

Wiping the sweat from his brow, Xiao Yan let out a puff of air and slowly put his clothes on.

Wearing his clothes messily, Xiao Yan's eyebrows suddenly perked up. He squinted his eyes as he looked towards the outside of the woods and let out a chuckle.

Xiao Yan's mouth twitched into a grim smile as he brushed aside the leaves on his shoulders and started walking out of the forest.

Out in the woods, the light from the sun fell down onto his body, seeping into his bones and imparting a warm cozy feeling deep down. Covering his eyes as he adjusted to the sunlight, Xiao Yan slightly tilted his head and saw the form of a woman on a rock not too far away from him.

The sun illuminated the tall graceful girl's delicate figure, highlighting her captivating curves – especially her pair of long, slender, sexy legs.

Looking over at Xiao Yu who was sitting quietly on the rock, Xiao Yan rested his hands on the back of his head and slowly walked towards the giant rock. He looked up at the impassive beauty; his gaze fell particularly long on her pair of sensual legs, lingering there for more than a moment. He then sniffled and let out a haughty comment, "Your legs are beautiful. No need to show them off....."

With just a few words, the cold Xiao Yu's charming face turned dark.

Her chest heaving slightly, Xiao Yu bit down her teeth and coldly replied, "Do you know why I came looking for you?"

"To beat me up?" Withdrawing his hands from his nose, Xiao Yan casually guessed, laughing a little.

"My brother was seriously wounded by your punch and now is stuck in bed, unable to move. Since you were so ruthless, I, as his sister, cannot let him be thrashed without payback." Xiao Yu's beautiful pair of eyes glared

at Xiao Yan, full of malice.

His mouth forming into cynical grin, Xiao Yan slanted his head and sneered, “Then tell me, from your point of view, in such an instance should I have remained still and took his attack, letting him break my arm in the process?”

Xiao Yu bit her scarlet lips. She still stubbornly fixed her eyes on Xiao Yan, her eyes filled with hatred not diminished in the slightest.

“No. If he really shattered my arm, your heart would only grieve for the unlucky me for a few minutes at most. Then, you wouldn’t feel any guilt, you wouldn’t even care if I were crippled for the rest of my life. Haha. It’s still that same old story again. You, Xiao Yu, with a personality like yours, one that enjoys discriminating without reason, what else can you do? I really freaking hate people like you. If your brother is a human, am I not then a human too?!” Xiao Yan’s anger rose with every sentence and in the end, he couldn’t help but resort to vulgar language.

“F*** you. ‘A Big chest but no brains,’ that’s the best way to describe idiotic woman like you.”

“Xiao Yan, you little bastard. Shut your mouth!”

Her face contorted in anger, turning green and white in frustration. Finally, Xiao Yu lashed out, unable to endure Xiao Yan anymore after his last bout of cursing.

Looking at Xiao Yu’s beautiful face turn ashen, Xiao Yan’s eyes filled with burning anger as he sneered and smacked his lips: His heart held a hint of glee.

Taking a deep breath, Xiao Yu slowly quelled the anger in her heart and used her seductive long legs to jump down from the boulder. She gritted her teeth as she said: “No matter what, I won’t let a little bastard like you off easy today.” After saying that, she stepped forward with her left foot and, gracefully moving her delicate body, her right leg stretched forward with air whistles as she ruthlessly aimed a kick at both of Xiao Yan’s legs.

With her sudden movement, Xiao Yan could only curse and quickly

jump back, barely avoiding Xiao Yu's kick.

"Hmph, no matter how talented you are, you are just an 8 Duan Qi. If I don't teach you a lesson today, your arrogance may reach as high as the skies." Looking at Xiao Yan, who was constantly dodging her attacks, she laughed coldly as her long slender legs danced in the air like a hurricane. The violent kicks brought about gusts of strong wind, tossing the leaves on the ground about.

Xiao Yu, having the strength of a 3 Star Dou Zhe, was by far stronger than Xiao Ning. In such a quick onslaught of attacks, Xiao Yan couldn't even find a chance to counter-attack; he could only dodge.

In spite only being able to dodge Xiao Yu's relentless flurry of kicks, Xiao Yan's face retained its calm. He squinted slightly and with a sharp gaze he constantly searched his opponent for weaknesses to exploit.

Xiao Yan blocked Xiao Yu's continuous barrage of kicks with his arms, but with each blow his arms grew a little more sore. Really, it seemed that Xiao Yu wasn't a complete idiot; she didn't go all out to deal with Xiao Yan and although her attacks seemed aggressive, they would at most cause short-term injuries.

Looking at Xiao Yan's hurriedly retreating figure, Xiao Yu's red lips lifted up in satisfaction. She tiptoed forward a little and once again ferociously prepared to spring an attack.

But when she started her attacks, Xiao Yan, who has been evading her ever since the start, suddenly went from a docile sheep to become a ferocious wolf. With Xiao Yan's curled palms pointing at her, Xiao Yu felt a strong suction force suddenly pull her in and she stumbled forward.

As her body leaned forward, the Dou Qi in Xiao Yu's body rapidly pooled at her feet. She was about to stand firm on the ground, however, the suction force abruptly disappeared and in its place was a powerful pushing force.....

With a pull and a push, Xiao Yu finally lost her balance and staggered back a few steps, unexpectedly falling and landing on her butt.

Being suddenly pushed down by Xiao Yan's sudden burst of skills, Xiao Yu seemed extremely shocked. She actually forgot to quickly get back up and when she finally snapped out of her daze and tried to react, a figure resembling a ferocious tiger descended from the skies and pinned her fast to the ground.

"Motherf***ker, this master is going to rape you today!"

TL: Note that this novel doesn't.... I'll just let the next chapter explain it....

The bruises on his face and injuries all over his body made Xiao Yan suck in a breath as his two hands pinned Xiao Yu's pulse on her pale wrists.

Chapter 47: Blasphemy

Xiao Yu was startled after hearing Xiao Yao's vulgar words. With each passing second, as she struggled against her holder with all her might, her face grew redder with exertion and anger. However, Xiao Yan proved to be stronger; he began to clamp down more tightly onto Xiao Yu's wrists, causing her hands to slowly numb.

After uselessly struggling for another short period of time, Xiao Yu was forced to give up her futile endeavor. She, feeling deep shame, glowered at Xiao Yan, her ample chest heaving slightly, as she scolded him, "Little bastard. Let me go!"

Xiao Yan opened his mouth, wincing at the waves of pain washing the bruises caused him. He took a few deep breaths and looked down sneering. "Let you go? Did I get hit for nothing? I said I was going to rape you today!"

To have someone many years younger than her pin her down and also have that person threaten repeatedly to rape her, Xiao Yu didn't know whether to cry or laugh as she firmly believed that Xiao Yan would not do such a thing.

Twisting her wrists, Xiao Yu still couldn't get away. She could only bat her eyes at him and snort at the absurdity of the situation. "You little bastard, you haven't even grown yet. Say those things when you've actually matured"

With his manhood being called into question, Xiao Yan immediately furrowed his brows. Lowering his head, he maliciously responded, "You want to try me?"

Feeling somewhat threatened by Xiao Yan's intense stare, Xiao Yu swallowed heavily. Being the arrogant person she was, she wouldn't submit. She instead stubbornly lifted her snow white chin and with a cold smile taunted, "If you dare try, I'll castrate you!"

Pursing his lips, Xiao Yan felt frustration as he looked down at this woman. If he were asked, Xiao Yan, even though terribly annoyed with

Xiao Yu, didn't want to go as far as committing such a terrible crime like rape. No matter how you said it, she was still his older cousin.

But, given the circumstances, if Xiao Yan were to back down, wouldn't he have suffered for nothing?

Eyes slightly narrowing, Xiao Yan bit his lips. Suddenly, fiercely, he pushed her down and pressed himself tightly against her body.

Xiao Yan's abrupt movement stunned Xiao Yu and her mouth opened slightly; she still hadn't registered the shock of being violated.

As Xiao Yan ignored the suddenly quiet Xiao Yu, he quickly pinned both of her hands with his left to the ground. At the same time, his right hand snaked down her long slender legs, caressing them. Xiao Yan had understood long ago one thing: she placed a high value on her legs, abnormally high actually, even when considering the fact that they ensnared the hearts of men.

At the feeling of Xiao Yan's hand on her legs, Xiao Yu stiffened, before giving off a violent screech.

With his ears slightly ringing, Xiao Yan finished touching her and jumped away like a monkey, proceeding to quickly flee down the mountain. He knew she would go crazy after such treatment.

The screams continued for quite a while before they slowly abated. Xiao Yu's face was flushed crimson with anger and her eyes blazed with white hot fury as she stared down the barely visible blur at the foot of the mountain. Gnashing her teeth, she sharply yelled, "Xiao Yan, you little bastard. I'll cut you into ten-thousand pieces!"

The distant figure remained quiet, stealthily disappearing from her field of vision soon after.

"Bastard, bastard, bastard!"

Watching Xiao Yan's figure disappear, her face turned ugly as she smashed the ground next to her with both fists.

After venting her fury by bashing the nearby scenery, for a good while,

Xiao Yu finally calmed down. She blushed looking down at the several indistinct hand prints dotting her legs, each left a numbness in her legs.

Xiao Yu clenched her teeth and propped herself up, fighting the weak feeling racking her body and wanted to cry upon seeing her messy clothes. Not only had she failed to teach the little brat a lesson, she was taken advantage of by him; the results of the encounter left a bitter taste in her mouth.

Thinking back on Xiao Yan's actions, Xiao Yu felt shame and anger well up. This time, however, she didn't draw her sword and chase him like she did years ago.

She was an adult now and naturally couldn't act like before, letting everyone in the clan know that her thighs had been touched by that brat. Xiao Yu stood there thinking for a bit, before stomping her feet and cursing in a low voice, "Little bastard, you better not give me an opportunity, otherwise it won't be pretty!"

Xiao Yu wrinkled her nose, letting her fine black hair drift in the wind. She dusted off her messy clothes, straightening them up a bit then somewhat dejectedly started slowly heading down the mountain.

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After restlessly fleeing down the mountain Xiao Yan quickly behind a bush at the foot of the mountain with cool beads of sweat running down his back. It wasn't until he saw Xiao Yu pass by that he could let out a sigh of relief.

He rubbed his nose and unconsciously swung his right arm across his chest and grabbed his other arm. Looking off with a dreamy look on his face he whispered, "Compared with a few years ago, touching her now feels much better..."

"Ai, in front of this stupid woman I can never hold back my temper. It looks like my childhood grievances really do run deeper than normal." Xiao Yan bitterly laughed as he twisted his neck. Taking a deep breath, he pushed away the thought. After once again regaining his former tranquil state of mind, he slowly headed out.

Walking away from his hiding spot, Xiao Yan suddenly stopped and somewhat embarrassed turned his head to look at the black-clothed maiden leaning against a tree in the distance. He awkwardly laughed, “Xun Er, what are you doing here?”

The distant Xun Er was lazily leaning against the tree. The purple belt around her small waist flowed freely in the wind as her beautiful eyes swept over Xiao Yan. A fake smile was on her face as she said, “Xiao Yan ge-ge, I just saw Xiao Yu angrily walking by. Could it be that you provoked her again?”

Embarrassedly touching his nose, Xiao Yan walked forward and dryly chucked, “Who knows why she’s in a bad mood again....”

Watching the laughing Xiao Yan, Xun Er couldn’t help but shake her head. “Whenever Xiao Yan ge-ge is around with Xiao Yu, he inevitably can’t think clearly and does some shocking things.”

Hearing Xun Er’s words, Xiao Yan felt a little guilty but he innocently shrugged his shoulders and said, “You know, I was forced to.”

Lightly laughing, Xun Er pursed her small lips. Her hands held behind her back; her maiden’s graceful beauty was rather moving.

“Tomorrow is a day for going to the Qi Method Pavilion to look for new techniques. Xiao Yan ge-ge should prepare.” She said as she left but the sound lingered on.

Chapter 48: Qi Method Pavilion

Standing within the group, Xiao Yan lifted his head to look at the colossal pavilion in front of him and let out a sigh, marvelling at the amazing view before him.

On the sign in front of the building were three engraved words – “Qi Method Pavilion” – which exuded ancient grandeur. The signboard in front had a slight yellow hue and coupled with the chips and dents that covered its body, it was obvious that this place had gone through the vicissitudes of time.

This was the most important place in the entire Xiao clan: the Qi Method Pavilion!

Every single Qi Method that the clan has gathered for the past hundreds of years were all stored here. These techniques were the foundation on which the Xiao Clan secured its status to this day.

As the most important place of the clan, the security on the pavilion was extremely stringent. On every other day, it was essentially a forbidden place that even Xiao clan members were prohibited from entering. It was only after the Coming of Age Ceremony that this place would be temporarily opened to the clan.

Squinting his eyes, Xiao Yan briefly swept his gaze across the several hidden corners of the pavilion that were concealed by shadows. His keen soul perception informed him that every movement made in this place was being closely monitored by the guards that were concealing themselves.

In several hidden places within the pavilion, Xiao Yan noticed that powerful auras were lurking unseen. It seemed that the clan really held this Qi Method Pavilion in great esteem.

Slightly turning his head, Xiao Yan exchanged a quick glance with Xun Er. Both of them noticed a hint of a smile in the other’s eyes. Clearly, the guards that were hidden in the surrounding area had been detected by the two of them.

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"I have already announced the rules regarding entry into the Qi Method Pavilion many times in the past, so I shall not repeat them in detail again. In short, after entering the Qi Method Pavilion, all of you are to return within 2 hours, In addition, each person is permitted to only 1 Qi Method which is to be compatible with their attribute. You may not take more than that. If anyone tries to sneak away with more, that person will forfeit his or her right to obtain a Qi Method. Therefore, all of you best take heed!" Standing at the top of the stairs, Xiao Zhan's commanding gaze swept across the youths below him as he said this in a solemn tone.

"Yes!" The group shouted excitedly in reply. Everyone stared at the gigantic pavilion with fiery eyed desire. Obtaining a better Qi Method was equivalent to gaining a head start over one's peers, directly putting themselves in the lead. This had always been something that every clan member deeply desired.

"Since you are all clear on the rules, let us begin then."

Xiao Zhan nodded in satisfaction. He took a step back and revealed a stone pillar that was in front of the pavilion's doors. The pillar was around 1 meter in height and atop it rested a clear crystal ball.

With a flourish of his hand, two guards that were behind started pushing at the enormous black door, the doors produced a low creak as they slowly opened.

"After determining your attribute, you may enter the pavilion. Remember, upon entering, follow the passage marked with your corresponding attribute. Do not accidentally wander onto the wrong path!" Nodding his head towards the crowd, Xiao Zhan gestured for the test to begin.

Seeing Xiao Zhan's signal, a youth in front excitedly jumped onto the stairs. As he laid both of his hands onto the crystal ball, a faint green glow was issued.

"Wind attribute. Ok, you may enter." Xiao Zhan took a sideways glance at the crystal ball and nodded with a smile.

Since someone had already taken the lead, everyone below could no longer remain still. One by one, they rushed up the stairs, and upon determining their attribute, swarmed en masse the Qi Method Pavilion.

Seeing the crowd thin around him around him, Xiao Yan touched his nose and smiled at Xun Er, “Let’s go see what kind of technique we can get our hands on.”

Xun Er cutely laid her hands out. The clan’s Qi Methods actually did not attract her in the least. However, since Xiao Yan was interested, she would happily accompany him.

Because the pair was not in any rush, it wasn’t until everyone else had already gone in that they started to slowly walk up the stairs. Seeing this, Xiao Zhan could only give them a helpless look.

Xiao Yan flashed a toothy grin at Xiao Zhan and touched the crystal ball with his palm. A fiery red light, several times brighter than any before it, lit up, signifying an affinity for the fire attribute.

Xiao Zhan had already known his own son’s attribute, so his expression remained unchanged. With a slight nod, his eyes suddenly darted across the surrounding area and then he inconspicuously took a step forward. Letting out a cough, Xiao Zhan bent forward and uttered in a soft voice, “Passage of Fire, path 3, room 43!”

Upon hearing what Xiao Zhan said, Xiao Yan was initially shocked, but immediately found it amusing as he came to realize that his father was actually abusing his authority for his son. After giving an almost unnoticeable nod, Xiao Yan stood aside to observe. It was now Xun Er’s turn to be tested.

Xun Er looked at the shiny crystal ball and hesitated for a moment. Then, as she shook her head with a reluctant look, she lightly prodded at the crystal ball with a slim finger.

Following Xun Er’s touch, the crystal ball that had just quieted down suddenly burst forth in red light again. For the briefest of moments, the ball became as hot and dazzling as a fireball.

Astounded by the crystal ball that had now turned into a ball of flame, Xiao Zhan's mouth dropped open a little as he involuntarily took in a sharp breath.

The fireball persisted for a short period of time and it was only until Xun Er retracted her finger that the flames slowly began to die. After the light died down, one could see various thin cracks covering the entire crystal ball.

Bitterly looking at the crystal ball that was on the verge of shattering, Xiao Zhan could only let out a sigh. Looking at Xun Er with a gaze that seemed to be filled with some hidden meaning, he waved his arm and said, "Hurry up and go in."

"Tsk, such a pure body of fire. Such a shame that she was not born with an affinity for the wood attribute. Otherwise, she would have been a natural born Alchemist." While Xiao Yan remained shocked from the incident that occurred before him, he heard Yao Lao's voice that was filled with amazement.

Nodding silently in his heart, Xiao Yan looked at Xun Er who was walking towards him. Letting out a shrug, he turned around and walked into the Qi Method Pavilion.

Xiao Zhan's eyes lingered on the two people who walked into the Qi Method Pavilion side by side and then returned to look at the crystal ball. It had finally broken into several pieces with a "ka cha" sound. He stroked his chin and mumbled to himself. "Sigh, this really is... this really is way too remarkable. This girl Xun Er, not only does she have a good temperament, she is also a real beauty too. But her background is also extremely terrifying. She is incomparably better than that Nalan Yanran. If only Yan Er could have a bride like her, how nice that would be....."

After saying his thoughts out loud, Xiao Zhan shook his head and burst into laughter, ridiculing himself. He could not believe that he actually entertained such a wild fantasy.

While Xiao Zhan was laughing at himself, he didn't realize that Xun Er who was about to enter the pavilion, stiffened while her delicate ears

turned, just like the crystal ball from earlier, fiery red and alluring.

Chapter 49: Selecting a Qi Method

It was a little dim after stepping passed the pitch black door. Gentle lights shone from within the fire pearls that hung on the surrounding walls, giving the spacious pavilion a deep and quiet ambiance.

The pavilion had several wide passages branching out from the main entrance. At the start of each passage, there were large inscriptions that described the elements each passage was home to.

Xiao Yan's eyes swept through each passage before they finally stopped on the Passage of Fire on the far left. Slightly feeling his nose, he turned his head sideways. However, what came into his view was a shyly blushing Xun Er. Astounded, he asked, "Xun Er, what is it?"

"Ah?" Being brought back to her senses by Xiao Yan's voice, Xun Er's crimson face actually reddened even more. It took her a few moments to gradually recover before she wrinkled her nose at Xiao Yan and replied in an indifferent tone, "It was nothing, let's hurry up and look for a Qi Method."

Xiao Yan made a baffled expression, but then pointed towards the Passage of Fire and said with a smile, "Let's go."

Xun Er indifferently nodded while a hint of red still lingered on her face.

Glancing sideways at Xun Er's attractive little face, Xiao Yan's heart couldn't help but skip a beat. He hurriedly led the way, looking only straight ahead.

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The Passage of Fire branched into five smaller paths. Within each path, the shadows of several clan members could be vaguely seen.

"Passage of Fire, path three." After a quick glance, Xiao Yan led Xun Er directly into the third path.

What was within this path appeared to be a completely different world. On both sides of the path, several meters apart from each other, were thick red-colored wooden doors. At this moment, all the doors were wide

open but within each open door was a faint red light curtain.

This red curtain was a type of defensive barrier. At the same time, it also served as the final test for the youths of the clan. If someone wished to obtain the Qi Method within, they had to first break this barrier.

There were already quite a few clan members who had entered this path. These people were now standing in front of several different wooden doors, viciously striking at the red barrier with flushed faces. Occasionally, the sounds of barriers breaking were heard, accompanied by celebratory cheers that rang out from within the pavilion. During those times, those who were still attacking the barriers with all their might couldn't help but show faces full of envy.

Xiao Yan and Xun Er slowly walked along the path, slightly enjoying themselves, watching the clan members on both sides, who burned with ardor.

After taking a turn at another corner, Xiao Yan looked at the number engraved on the wooden door beside him. It showed number 37.

He touched his nose and smiled before hurrying ahead. Finally, he stopped in front of the door marked with the number 43 and light-heartedly said, "So, this is it."

Within the path, there were still more than ten clan members around. All of them were dumbfounded when they saw Xiao Yan stopping in front of room Number 43. This room actually had the toughest barrier in that particular path. Earlier on, several decently skilled clan members had tried to break the barrier, however, all of them ran into a wall.

Unconcerned about the surprised gazes thrown his way, Xiao Yan slowly laid his palm on the light barrier.

"Xiao Yan Ge-ge, by doing this, is what Uncle Xiao did considered abusing his authority for personal gain?" Seeing Xiao Zhan's actions, Xun Er playfully winked her eye and softly asked with a bemused smile.

After having gauged the thickness of the barrier, Xiao Yan turned his head around and answered with feigned ferociousness, "Little girl, you

better act as if you haven't seen or heard anything. Otherwise.....”

Amused by Xiao Yan's expression, Xun Er flashed a smile and wrinkled her exquisite face. This kind of girlish behavior instantly caused the surrounding members to become goggle-eyed.

After returning a teasing smile, Xiao Yan took two steps back and stood with his legs slightly apart. Slowly, he balled up his fist and closed his eyes. Then, the Dou Qi inside his body started to circulate following a specific pathway at a high speed.

Xun Er was lazily leaning against a wall, her beautiful curves perfectly wrapped up in her tight fitting clothings. Currently her eyes were tightly locked onto Xiao Yan who was gathering his Dou Qi. Inside those blinking eyes, pale golden flames flickered.

“Hah!” His eyes suddenly opened. Following that, Xiao Yan’s feet abruptly kicked off the ground. With a quick rotation of his body in midair, his back now faced the barrier. Next, his right elbow retracted as a mild wind piercing screech sounded. Finally, he heavily punched the red light barrier as he twisted himself.

“Octane Blast!”

Giving a suppressed shout in his mind, Xiao Yan’s fist violently pounded against the barrier. Immediately, ripples started to quickly spread out from the center of the barrier.

“Break!” Following his shout and witnessed by more than ten shocked onlookers, the red light curtain shattered like glass!

Xiao Yan slowly exhaled his breath. With a shake of his arms, multiple popping sounds came from under his sleeve, before his sleeve softened.

Off to the side, watching the now shattered red barrier, Xun Er lightly clapped her hands and nodded with pouted lips before she said, “That is a good battle technique. The attack power is very strong!”

Xiao Yan cracked his neck and stretched his arms before he replied indifferently, “It was only so-so.”

Having heard Xiao Yan's statement, those other members in the path suddenly felt their chest tightening. Such a ridiculous battle technique was only so-so? Truly a trauma inducing statement.....

"Hehe, let's go and see what kind of technique is kept inside." Xiao Yan turned his chin towards the room that had a slightly reddish hue before taking the lead to enter.

The inside of the room was considerably brighter but it was not a very spacious room. In the center of the small room was a stone table, where a dark red colored scroll quietly laid.

Xiao Yan walked up to the scroll and picked it up with a hint of amusement. He read the words written at the back of the scroll, "High Huang Qi Method: Incinerating Flame!"

"This is indeed not bad. It is actually the clan's best Fire Attribute Qi Method. Hehe, seems like Uncle Xiao has spent a lot of effort for the benefit of Xiao Yan Ge-ge." Soft laughter came from behind him.

Xiao Yan nodded with a smile. He felt a sense of warmth in his heart.

A snow white hand suddenly shot out from behind Xiao Yan and took away the dark red scroll from his hands. With her head tilted as she held the scroll, Xun Er said softly, "Xiao Yan Ge-ge, even though you might be able to obtain higher leveled Qi Method in the future, the fact is, your progress in the future will be determined by the level of training technique that you used when you first started. High Huang Qi Method... it is actually a bit low."

Xiao Yan nodded with a faint smile.

Seeing Xiao Yan's calm expression, Xun Er slightly frowned, then let out a sigh. With a flick of her fingers, an ancient looking scroll appeared in her hand. The scroll's color was like that of a red agate.

"This is a fire attribute High Xuan Qi Method: Flame Manipulation!"

Xun Er fondled the scroll and said softly, "Xiao Yan Ge-ge does not need to reject my offer to save face. Xun Er also knows that you are not someone who is overly pedantic. A high leveled Qi Method is extremely

beneficial for your future, so.....”

Looking at Xun Er who was holding a scroll in each hand, Xiao Yao let out a bitter laugh and shook his head. He extended his hand to pat her on the head, then proceeded to take back the scroll with the High Huang training technique. This was done under Xun Er’s somewhat hurt expression.

“Xiao Yan Ge-ge.....” Xun Er curled her mouth and showed a saddened expression. Her watery eyes were mesmerizing to behold.

“Hehe, thank you Xun Er. I am not rejecting your offer to preserve my reputation.” With a gentle smile, Xiao Yan leaned forward and spoke softly into her ear.

“Xiao Yan Ge-ge can obtain an even better Qi Method.....”

Chapter 50: Help?

Watching Xiao Yan leave the room with the Qi Method, Xun Er shook her head. With helplessness in her voice, she said, "I'll believe you for now."

Xiao Yan looked at the other clan members, each shocked, while walking out of the room.. With a gentle shrug of his shoulders, he waited for Xun Er before the two aimlessly wandered forward, casually chatting away.

Since they had two hours together, Xun Er and Xiao Yan were not in a rush to head outside. Because the Qi Method Pavilion was normally forbidden to everyone, it was a rare opportunity to be in it today. Thus, they decided to satisfy their curiosity.

Right when they were about to leave the pathway of fire, Xun Er casually entered a small room and fetched Low Xuan Qi Method scroll. Accompanying Xiao Yan, they then continued on down the other hallways.

Today would be the noisiest day of the year in the Qi Method Pavilion. Every single hallway had a great multitude of people packed between its walls while each person had a markedly excited look in their eyes as they smashed against the red energy curtains. Every time a curtain broke, another shout of excitement could be heard.

In this enjoyable atmosphere, even Xiao Yan had a faint smile on his small face.

Walking out from another hallway, Xiao Yan took a look at the time. Stretching, he laughed while looking at Xun Er, "We should be going; it's almost time."

Nodding indifferently, Xun Er followed Xiao Yan around a corner before heading directly towards the exit of the Qi Method Pavilion.

After walking by one of the paths, Xiao Yan's eyebrows rose up in surprise. Not too far away, he could see a red dress that belonged to Xiao Mei. Her charming face blushed as she wandered continuously around the front of the barrier. Based on her appearance, it looked like she was trying

everything she could to get the Qi Method but wasn't able to break the barrier...

Today, Xiao Mei was wearing beautiful red clothing with a slightly tight skirt and a ribbon around her waist; which tied itself closely around her waist.

Right now, her pure and lovely face looked anxious as her eyebrows knitted together cutely. The clansmen around her were practically falling over themselves trying to talk to her.

.....

Xiao Mei's mood was getting worse by the second; she was basically near desperation. Before today, her father had secretly told her a room number, telling her that it was imperative to grab hold of that Qi Method. After conceiving every method possible and spending hours and hours, he finally got a snippet of information from the ones responsible for the arrangement of the Qi Method Pavilion. He knew that if Xiao Mei could get a Wind Attribute High Huang Qi Method, then she would be ahead of everyone else in the race for power.

Although Xiao Mei's father got the right room number, he neglected to take into account the sturdiness of the barrier on the room. Xiao Mei had been outside of the room for an hour straight but she had been unable to break through its protections and even though other clansmen were drooling at the thought of helping her, they couldn't even shake it. The protective curtain could only be attacked by one person at a time and if the barrier detected two or more people trying to break through it, it would boost its defenses. In the end, it was like trying to draw water using a bucket with a hole.

By now, two hours had already gone by. If she couldn't break the protections on the room soon, then Xiao Mei would end up leaving empty handed. Thinking about the consequences of not being able to get a single Qi Method, Xiao Mei's lovely eyes could not help but begin to water.

With a misty gaze, she shook her head with a bitter smile. Looking around, her beautiful eyebrows rose up as she saw someone familiar.

Not too far away was a black clothed young man holding both of his hands behind his head with a tranquil look on his face.

Wiping at her face in a hurry, Xiao Mei had already given up but the appearance of Xiao Yan had brought new hope. Erasing any traces of her tears, her teeth bit into her red lips as she walked over to Xiao Yan in hopes that he would help her.

The other clansmen around Xiao Mei looked at her new change in appearance and followed her gaze to find Xiao Yan. Their low chatter slowly died down as their gazes had a hint of respect.

For a moment, the originally noisy walkway immediately became silent.

Even under a dozen or so gazes, Xiao Yan still walked forward with a look of indifference. Without even a sideways glance towards Xiao Mei who couldn't formulate her words, he walked past her...

With her red lips slightly open, Xiao Mei looked at Xiao Yan who had just ignored her, stunned at the treatment she received. After a while, her beautiful face became filled with self depreciation, as she gently shook her head. The anger that rose in her dissipated quickly as she remembered the attitude she had shown towards Xiao Yan for the past three years.

"Ha ha, this must be retribution, I really am a loathsome person. You reap what you sow....." Xiao Mei gently squatted down to the ground. Her shoulders were twitching slightly as a stifled cry echoed throughout the quiet passageway.

Looking at Xiao Mei who looked like an abandoned kitten as she sat on the ground, the surrounding young clansmen sighed sadly while shaking their heads.

Xiao Mei sobbed lightly as she squatted on the ground. But she suddenly sensed something wrong in the atmosphere and slowly lifted her crying face only to be startled.

The youth who had been walking away had turned back and was walking slowly towards Xiao Mei with his hands behind his head.

"Get out of the way." Xiao Yan said indifferently as he glanced at Xiao

Mei.

“Ah? Oh.....” The startled Xiao Mei recovered immediately with joy returning to her pretty face and like an obedient child she made way for him.

Under the curious yet grateful gaze of those who were present, Xiao Yan stood before the curtain which guarded the door. With his palm extended, the boy breathed in lightly.

Everybody remained silent. Then suddenly like thunder, he moved. Twisting his body, Xiao Yan lifted his foot and like a whip, it went forward. Making a ‘Kaka’ sound, it tore through the surrounding air.

“Bang!” The ruthless kick landed on the barrier causing ripples to rapidly pulse through it. Finally, it broke under the shocked gaze of everyone.

His foot remained in the air for a while before Xiao Yan slowly brought his leg down to the ground. Twisting his neck a little, he turned away and then walked towards the far away Xun Er.

“Biao-ge Thank you I am sorry.” Xiao Mei timidly thanked Xiao Yan passing by her.

“Yeah.”

Xiao Yan glanced at the girl who had lost all of her arrogance and gave her a slight nod before disappearing from the admiring eyes of the other clansmen.

Chapter 51: Relief

Nearing the heavy door, there were more than 10 guards with indifferent eyes standing firmly before the gate, barring it. At one corner of the gate in a chair, sat an aloof looking man. In his hands was a pen and a thick book.

At this moment many clansmen lined up in a row in front of the old man, each one of them had brought whatever Qi Method to him so they could sign it out. After doing so, they carefully left the pavilion under the cold stares of the 10 or more guards.

This was the procedure to leave the Qi Method Pavilion. Before entering the Qi Method Pavilion, Xiao Yan and everyone else was informed about the procedure, therefore it was not something unexpected.

The Qi Method Pavilion was a place where all of the clan's Qi Methods were held; methods that were acquired painstakingly by the clan for over dozens of generations. These Qi Methods were the foundation of Xiao Clan, thus the clan had extremely protective measures on the methods.

The Clan had their Qi Method scrolls made out of a special type of bamboo. The bamboo could be defined as a mother-son. The mother part was the size of the palm while the son part would be able to grow as large as a dozen meters. Since the technique scrolls were made from this special material, as long as the clan chief held onto the mother part, there was no way that anyone could sneak away with a scroll. The moment one left the area with a son scroll, the mother scroll would notify everyone.

The Parent's area of influence just happened to cover the entire Xiao Clan. Therefore, once a technique scroll leaves the Xiao Clan, it is detected. Of course, nothing is absolute in this world. An individual with powerful enough Dou Qi could forcefully destroy the connection between the scrolls. However, with power at that level, why would one bother to steal Huang level Qi Methods...?

It was finally Xiao Yan's turn after waiting in line for a period of time. Walking to the front, he withdrew a Qi Method from his pocket and gave it to the old man.

Receiving the dark red scroll from Xiao Yan left the old man slightly surprised. His eyes quickly appraised the boy as he thought to himself “This, the [Burning Flame Refinement], was protected by a shield with the power of a 9th Duan Qi. This little brat, to think he could actually get through it.... It would seem he has some skills after all.”

After recording that Xiao Yan had that scroll, the old man returned it to him and indifferently cautioned, “I think you know the rules, right?”

“The scroll can’t leave the clan, otherwise there will be severe consequences! You must return the scroll after one year! There must be no damage to it.”

Casually nodding his head, Xiao Yan moved to the side. He leaned on the front door and waited for Xun Er’s scroll to be recorded.

Flashing Xiao Yan a light smile, Xun Er extended her snow white wrist and took out her scroll.

Seeing Xun Er standing in front of him, the emotionless face of the old man suddenly let out a hint of a respectful smile. Using both hands to receive the scroll, he then quickly recorded the borrower of the scroll.

Standing off to the side, Xiao Yan narrowed his eyes at the old man after seeing the change in his attitude. Xiao Yan fingers curled instinctively slightly. Since this old man was in charge of the Qi Method Pavilion, his position in the clan was comparable to that of one of the 3 elders.

Xiao Yan had heard that this old man’s nickname in the clan, Cold hearted Xiao Han. This old guy, even if it was to his own father, would still talk in a foreign manner. An old emotionless face, like the muscles of the recently dead, stiff with rigor mortis. .

This cold faced old man, who didn’t even respect the clan elder, was acting so respectful before Xun Er. This once again kindled Xiao Yan’s interest in Xun Er’s identity.

Rubbing his nose, he thought about how each time Xun Er was silent about her identity. Lifting his head, he saw Xun Er coming over with a smile on her face. With a shrug of his shoulders, he left with her through

the front door.

Bursting out from the crowded entrance, Xiao Yan breathed fresh air. The atmosphere inside the Qi Method Pavilion was far too oppressive to breathe normally.

“What’s wrong, Yan Er?” Low laughter greeted Xiao Yan as a figure came into view. Looking through the Qi Method Pavilion’s door, the figure asked with a smile.

Tilting his head to smile at his father, Xiao Yan nodded back with a smile of his own. A red scroll came out from inside his sleeves, “I got it.”

Seeing the red scroll, Xiao Zhan gave a sharp intake of air, “It’s a good thing you were able to get it.” He said in a low voice.

Seeing his father’s expression, Xiao Yan couldn’t help but roar with pride filled laughter alongside him.

Extending his arm to clap Xiao Yan’s shoulder, Xiao Zhan smiled, “Now that you have a Qi Method, once you become a Dou Zhe, then you’ll be able to practice Dou Qi for real.”

Xiao Yan nodded obediently as he returned the red scroll back up his sleeves. He could not help but think softly, “Hmm, I don’t know what’s that special about that Qi Method. A Qi Method that can evolve...is that even possible?”

“It’s even stranger than a Tian level Qi Method...” Trying to recall the strange yet arrogant words of Yao Lao. Xiao Yan shook his head with a bitter laugh. He had just come across one of the finest Qi Methods in his life: Xun Er’s High Xuan level Qi Method: Flame Manipulation. To be honest, he had an internal struggle when he declined it. After all, Qi Methods of that caliber were not only expensive but extremely rare.

Massaging his forehead with an open palm, he was starting to regret declining Xun Er’s kindness but the deed had already been done, it was too late. Xiao Yan did not have the face to ask Xun Er again for it, so he had no choice but to pray that Yao Lao was not playing around with him. Otherwise, he would be the biggest loser out of everyone.

“Hmph, it’s only High Xuan, there’s nothing special about that. Even though she isn’t normal, her collection of Qi Methods can’t possibly compare to mine.” Right when Xiao Yan was praying that Yao Lao didn’t deceive, Yao Lao gave a slight humph and started speaking.

“At last you say something...” Hearing the voice within his own thoughts, Xiao Yan scratched his nose. His mouth twitched upwards into a pleasant smile as he spoke; his point of saying so much was so that he could force that old geezer to say something calming.

“Ai...you tiny brat, trying to deceive me...” An echo came out from within Xiao Yan’s mind. Yao Lao didn’t know whether to laugh or cry and instead said, “Brat, keep on practicing Dou Qi. Qi Methods are not something for you to worry about: mine won’t be shabby. In the future, your achievements won’t be lower than that little girl. Her clan is only... Ahem.”

Even though Xiao Yan was disappointed that the last sentence was incomprehensible, he still nodded with a smile; he was given an answer to his question so he could concentrate on practicing Dou Qi so that he could become a Dou Zhe. This was the first step he had to take in order from him to become strong and...for him to find Nalan Yanran who has been on his mind for quite some time...

Chapter 52: Breakthrough

After the Qi Method selection, the entire clan seemed much emptier than usual. The young clansmen who were unable to achieve 7 Duan Qi had been assigned to various clan businesses outside of the clan home, where they would learn their respective tricks of the trade. The talented members of the clan, those who had successfully obtained a Qi Method, started to immerse themselves in rigorous training, in hopes of learning their Qi Method skill as fast as possible.

As the burning sun rose high in the sky, rays of heat baked the earth like an oven. Heat waves bled out of the ground causing ripples in the air, making the air distorted and blurry.

Within the dense forest atop the mountain bordering the Xiao Clan...

Sunlight trickled through the dense foliage, splattering the leaf-matted ground with tiny droplets of light -like a sky full of stars.

In the small forest two shadows weaved and crossed about, explosions rippled the air whenever their palms met. Violent winds gushed forth from each exchange, rushing through the fallen leaves and tossing them into the air.

Engaging in another fierce flurry of blows, Xiao Yan used both palms to parry Xun Er's fair hands and a muffled 'boom' sound rang out with each counter. Though each attack looked light, in actuality whenever one landed it would instantly turn vicious and powerful.

The corners of Xiao Yan's mouth twitched as he was hit by a strong force, strong enough to cause him to stumble back two steps. Xun Er, on the other hand, was starting to get bruises on her delicate palms because of all the times she got hit..

Seeing Xiao Yan stumble backwards, a slight smile formed on Xun Er's lips as her fair hands slowly danced in the air, her fingers wrapped in a golden silky glow.

"Tsk tsk, so strong... " Settling down, the slightly shocked Xiao Yan

inwardly shook his head and directed his eyes at Xun Er, she had a slight smile on her face. She then licked her lips, emitting a strong battle lust.

He abruptly pushed himself off the ground with the soles of his feet and dashed forward, specks of mud scattered in his wake.

With a glance at the incoming Xiao Yan, the corners of Xun Er's dainty mouth lifted up as the golden glow on her hands intensified.

A small crater was left after Xiao Yan had started rushing forward. He suddenly stopped a meter away from Xun Er. So perfect was his stop, it seemed as if Xiao Yan had never moved at all.

Seeing the depth of control Xiao Yan possessed over his movements, Xun Er's autumn water eyes couldn't help but betray a sense of admiration.

"Octane Blast!"

As his running figure suddenly came to a halt, his right foot pushed off the ground causing his body to spin: increasing the force of his attack. Filled with power his left leg arced through the air, bringing forth an ear piercing shriek of wind. Fiercely, he angled his blow at Xun Er.

Seeing Xiao Yan's fierce incoming attack, Xun Er slightly nodded her exquisite chin in response. her dainty hands formed into a strange semicircular shield of light that slammed against Xiao Yan's left leg without hesitation.

"Bang!"

A muffled boom resounded from the clash causing the leaves on the ground to be swept up into the sky, before scattering about.

Leg met fist in a momentary collision and a split second later, the two figures were pushed back.

The strength of the blow was enough to push Xiao Yan's body four to five meters into the air. As his body fell downwards, he angled his right hand to face a nearby tree and emitted a suction force to negate the force of the fall. Jumping off a tree branch, he landed steadily onto the ground.

Lifting his head to look at Xun Er who was likewise pushed back a few steps, Xiao Yan smacked his lips and laughed, asking: “What was that Dou Technique you used?”

“High level Xuan Dou Technique: Swallow’s Return..... When mastered, it is able to return the force of an opponent’s attack. I am only at the beginner’s level, thus I can only return about 10% of the power.” Xun Er smiled while replying.

Having understood, a thought emerged from within Xiao Yan: “Borrowing a force to counter another.....”

“This Dou Technique that Elder Brother Xiao Yan used is not bad either. If Xun Er was not a one star Dou Zhe with a power beyond yours, I would be unable to withstand the strong force from that attack.” Xun Er smiled, her eyes forming two crescent moons.

Xiao Yan shrugged without commenting, lazily twisting his neck. A high level fight caused muscle fatigue and mental exhaustion to build up.

Rubbing the sweat that was pouring like water off his face, Xiao Yan silently cursed the hot and humid weather before he stripped off his shirt.

Under the shirt, his young, somewhat tanned and fit physique was revealed. Even though it was not considered muscular, his small body hid an explosive power.

Enjoying the half naked Xiao Yan, Xun Er’s beautiful face flushed.

Xiao Yan grabbed his clothes and leaned tiredly against a limestone rock. Facing Xun Er, he let out a bitter laugh, “Sigh, it’s already been two months, yet I am still stuck at the 8 Duan Qi.....”

Looking at the somewhat helpless Xiao Yan, Xun Er pursed her lips and giggled. Gracefully sitting down, she joined Xiao Yan and leaned against the limestone rock. She retrieved the sweat filled clothes from Xiao Yan before gently drying the sweat off his body. Consoling him, she said, “The 8th to the 9th Duan Qi is the beginning of Dou Qi bottleneck stage. Xiao Yan ge-ge should not be impatient. When the time is right, all that should be, will be.....” At this point, Xun Er suddenly sensed a heated gaze and

looking up, she found Xiao Yan staring at her. Flushing red, she pouted playfully: "Xiao Yan ge-ge....."

The young maiden's gentle and playful tone was like a refreshing breeze in the humid jungle.

Because of the hot weather, Xun Er wore a short, light-green apron that exhibited a lovely patch of white skin below her long, alluring nape. In addition to that, the developing marshmallows of the young maiden were revealed by the tight contours of her clothing, causing a sense of beauty in the youthful body. Faced with such a beautiful scene, it was no wonder that Xiao Yan felt slightly absent-minded.

Awakened from his stupor by Xun Er, Xiao Yan's face flushed slightly. Letting out an embarrassed laugh, he lay on the cooling limestone, slowly closing his eyes, allowing Xun Er's pair of tiny hands to gently rub across his body.

The corners of her rosy lips slightly tipped upwards as Xun Er helped wipe Xiao Yan's body. Without turning, she secretly swept a glance across his body, only to be startled to find that unknowingly, he had fallen asleep.

Helplessly shaking her head, Xun Er also understood that today's high level fight had caused him to be exhausted. Wrinkling her nose, she put down the clothes as a soft golden glow started to gather at her fingertips.....

Sneakily taking another glance at the unresponsive Xiao Yan, Xun Er laid a finger on Xiao Yan's skin. Golden light followed the path along the finger and seeped into Xiao Yan's body.....

As golden light was transferred, beads of sweat started to roll down Xun Er's forehead and she could be seen slightly gritting her teeth. Just as she prepared to continue the transfer, a surprised look flashed across her face.

As he was in a deep sleep beside the limestone, an unfathomable sucking force suddenly originated from within Xiao Yan's body. Lines of Dou Qi gathered from the surroundings and started to quickly flow into his body.....

“Oh..... Is it a breakthrough?”

A gasp of shock and awe could be heard as Xun Er's small mouth formed into the shape of an O and she quietly watched Xiao Yan as he unknowingly absorbed Dou Qi.

Chapter 53: 9 Duan Qi

In the small lush forest, threads of white Dou Qi flowed through the air, continuously absorbed by Xiao Yan's body as he slumbered.

Looking at Xiao Yan, who had practically become an energy sink, Xun Er felt pleasantly surprised. Quietly putting some distance between him, she stood in silent vigil and guarded the area. If Xiao Yan were to be roused from his state of training mediation, he would lose a chance to advance another level.

The success of Xiao Yan's advancement could be said to be almost certain.

As the Dou Qi was absorbed, the faint traces of fatigue on Xiao Yan's face gradually faded away. Like a piece of warm jade, his delicate and pretty face glowed with a pale light.

For the next hour these events carried on continued within the small dense forest, until at last coming to the end.

Finally, when the lasts wisps of Dou Qi entered Xiao Yan, the small forest regained its original calm; the sun's burning rays continued to shine down on the forest.

Even though Xiao Yan's eyes were tightly shut, his chest rose and fell in a smooth and steady manner. Xun Er, seeing this, let out a sigh of relief, relaxed and laughed gently: "He has finally reached the 9th Duan Qi. Maybe in half a year, Xiao Yan ge-ge will be able to condense a Dou Qi Cyclone and become a true Dou Zhe."

A light hearted smile on her lips, Xun Er leaped onto a nearby limestone and sat down in a crosslegged position. Elbows on her knees, palms supporting her chin while her fingers lay on her cheeks, she waited for Xiao Yan to wake up.

.....

The sky had gradually turned to dusk when Xiao Yan finally arose from his deep slumber. Blinking his eyes in confusion, Xiao Yan stared blankly

about before regaining his wits. Lifting his head, his sight came to rest upon a figure clothed in the golden rays of the setting sun. Bright and clear like liquid water, a pair of eyes met his. He smiled.

"Is Xiao Yan ge-ge finally awake?" Xun Er let out a lovable laugh as she posed the question to the recently-awakened Xiao Yan.

Smiling with a nod of his head, Xiao Yan got up. Twisting his numb neck about, he lazily stretched. "Pi Li Pa La" the satisfying sounds of bones cracking against each other could be heard from a body that had just raised a Duan Qi.

Dazed at the feeling of achieving a breakthrough, Xiao Yan curled his hand in to a fist before uncurling it again, his jaw slightly slackened and he tilted his head; his face filled with equal parts of doubt and uncertainty and he uttered: "What..... I seem to have reached the 9 Duan Qi?"

Staring at Xiao Yan's look of bafflement with an interested look, Xun Er started to laugh.

Upon seeing Xun Er's nod, Xiao Yan's lips curled upwards into a smile. His heart was pleasantly surprised, though he still didn't know whether to laugh or cry. The last time he made a breakthrough, it was when he was sleeping. This time he made another breakthrough while asleep. This way of breaking through was a bit too comical.

Vigorously punching at the air a few times in rapid succession and feeling Dou Qi that was stronger than a few hours ago, Xiao Yan couldn't help but laugh.

After getting all of his pleasant surprise out of his mind, Xiao Yan was finally aware of the murky sky color. Giving an apologetic smile to Xun Er, he knew that she had been waiting for him this whole time.

While putting his clothes back on, he began to crack jokes with Xun Er, "Not leaving? Today's a good day so why don't you let me treat you to a nice meal in Wu Tang City."

TL: Ge = Brother and Ge-ge = Brother

"Xixi, I want the most expensive meal then..." She responded with a light

laugh of her own. Tiptoeing on the limestone for a while, she gingerly dropped down next to Xiao Yan, emitting a faint bell laugh that scatter across the gingerly green forest.

.....

In order to thank Xun Er for waiting the whole afternoon, Xiao Yan took care to take Xun Er on a stroll around Wu Tang City before parting with her in the clan.

Dragging his still somewhat excited legs back to his room, Xiao Yan dropped down heavily onto his bed and hugged his quilt. With a soft murmur to himself, he said, “At last, I am finally going to become a Dou Zhe once more...”

“Hey, this breakthrough you just managed... it was due to that little girl.” From the midst of the room, the laughter of an old man suddenly sounded.

Raising a single eyelid, Xiao Yan stared lazily at Yao Lao and furrowed his eyebrows, “What does Xun Er have to do with this?”

“Eh, she definitely had a part, otherwise you would had taken a week to breakthrough by yourself.” Yao Lao’s transparent body sat down on a chair, his casual tone ringing throughout the room.

Begrudgingly shrugging his shoulders, Xiao Yan threw his head back into his quilt. “Right now I’m already at 9 Duan, if I want to breakthrough to become a Dou Zhe, I’m afraid it’ll take me another half year or so...” After saying that, he momentarily paused and threw off his quilt. His previously focused face became gloomy, his voice now revealing a cold tone, “One year has already passed and yet I am still not a one star Dou Zhe. If things keep on going at this rate...I’m afraid I won’t be able to catch up to Nalan Yanran in three years.”

Upon hearing this, Yao Lao raised an eye to look at him but remained silent.

“Nalan Yanran is being trained to be the Faction of Misty Cloud’s next Faction leader. Her talent cannot be said to be low at all and the Faction of Misty Cloud is quite strong as well. They even have the formidable

alchemist Pill King Gu He amongst their ranks...if he were to help Nalan Yanran, her speed would be terrifying. It would be no slower than my training speed.” Xiao Yan thought aloud to himself.

Yao Lao tilted his head at Xiao Yan and saw Xiao Yan’s bright crystal like eyes focus closely on himself. Yao Lao immediately started to laugh but still made no comment.

Looking at Yao Lao’s face, Xiao Yan could only roll his eyes. His words were pointless...

“Heh...” After staying silent for some time, Yao Lao slowly sighed. Standing up to walk towards Xiao Yan, his lips began to curl into a smile: “That Gu He fellow isn’t anything more than a 6th tier Alchemist. Is he even worthy to be called a Pill King? Other than refining pills, what else can he do?”

Hearing Yao Lao talk in this manner, Xiao Yan’s face suddenly adopted a smiling expression. At this moment, he knew that the mysterious teacher was finally about to show his hand...

“Tomorrow, you will go buy some materials. Qi Gathering Powder, you will be eating it like it’s candy... I don’t believe that this Nalan will have this sort of treatment!” With both hands behind his back, Yao Lao sneered proudly.

Chapter 54: Raising Money

Of course, saying that he would be able to eat Qi Gathering Pills like candy was a somewhat boastful claim. However, given the skills of Yao Lao, with enough materials, helping Xiao Yan refine tens of Qi Gathering Pills was not a problem.

However, even with all the boastful claims of Yao Lao, Xiao Yao had no time to feel any excitement. With each and every required material uttered by Yao Lao, Xiao Yan couldn't help but feel his heart sink lower and lower.

"Tomorrow, prepare for me four 50 year old Inky Leaf Lotus flowers, two Ripened Snake Venom Fruits, one bundle of 20 year old Spirit Gathering Grass and a Rank 2 Water Attribute Magic Stone," Came Yao Lao's indifferent voice and when he saw Xiao Yan's stiff and distant look, he couldn't help but be startled. "What's the matter?"

"50 year old Inky Leaf Lotus? Flowers that age are sold for 3000 gold coins and that's just for a single blossom! Ripened Snake Venom Fruit? That's considered one of the top lower grade alchemy ingredients, even the pharmacies don't carry them, it would have to be through sheer luck if one were to ever obtain one and at the very least 8000 gold coins would be needed to buy just one. And the 20 year old Spirit Gather Grass? Dear god, I have only heard of this item appearing in auctions only once and the starting price was at 10,500 gold! Even the Rank 2 Water Attribute Magic Stone, the cheapest of all the materials, would require at least 2000 gold pieces." Xiao Yan's wiped his sweaty brow and painfully let out a groan, "These ingredients alone would cost me around 50,000. Where in the world would I get such a large sum of money?"

"Eh..." On hearing Xiao Yan whine, Yao Lao just rolled his eyes and shrugged his shoulders mockingly, "Obtaining those ingredients is your problem. It has nothing to do with me; I will only be in charge of refining the ingredients."

"Dammit. The cost for everything is going to be way too high. If I'm really going to eat Gathering Qi Powder like candy, I'm afraid that even

the Xiao Clan's wealth would be unable to cover the costs." Scolding himself, Xiao Yan fingered the green card he had hidden under the pillow with some regret. Helplessly, he said, "I only have 10,000 gold left from selling the Foundation Elixir, nowhere near enough to buy the ingredients you need."

Yao Lao laughed while leisurely sitting down onto a chair; showing that the matter of obtaining the ingredients was of no concern to him.

Kneading his head, Xiao Yan grimaced in pain as he continued his line of thought, "First, I'll just use this money to buy ingredients for the Foundation Elixir. Then I'll just sell that at the Auction House; otherwise, I'll never get enough money."

Yao Lao gave a smug nod. For him, refining something as low grade as the Foundation Elixir was nothing strenuous. Letting out a short breath, Xiao Yan flopped back onto his bed and bitterly laughed, "Being poor is extremely annoying..."

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The next morning, Xiao Yan secretly slipped away from the clan to Wu Tan City's pharmacies and bought all of the materials needed for the Foundation Elixir. Afterwards, Xiao Yan searched for a tavern in an isolated area and entered.

Because he would be selling the elixirs for other people to use, he could let Yao Lao mix the ingredients together without a single care. So, just like last time, Xiao Yan bought the cheapest and lowest quality materials.

Because he desperately needed money, Xiao Yan bought enough materials to make 7 Foundation Elixirs, which had completely drained the green card of money.

While waiting for Yao Lao to refine the ingredients, Xiao Yan began to flick the green card around his hands. Absentmindedly shaking his head, Xiao Yan came to realize that he had once again returned to his original poverty stricken state.

This time, Yao Lao had spent an entire hour to create all of the

Foundation Elixirs. Arranging each of the seven white jade bottles neatly onto the table, Xiao Yan couldn't help but smile widely. Carefully wrapping each bottle up in cloth, he secured them tightly to his back.

Gently patting the elixirs on his back, Xiao Yan swung a huge black cloak over himself to hide both him and the elixirs from view before laughing to himself as he exited the tavern.

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At the Primer Auction House inside the treasure inspection hall.

Primer Auction's top auctioneer, Ya Fei, was staring at 7 small jade bottles full of Foundation Elixir in front of her in shock. Her eyes had lost her usual sparkle and she leaned forward at a precarious angle.

"Cough..." Sitting not too far away from Ya Fei with his black pouch, Xiao Yan coughed, bringing her back to attention.

Her pale white hands tenderly groped the jade bottles while she sniffed it to try and authenticate the elixirs. After a while, she handed the bottles to Gu Ni, the alchemist expert of the auction.

Taking the Foundation Elixir from her, Gu Ni began to inspect the bottle closely and then remarked, "All of these are truly Foundation Elixirs..."

Upon hearing Gu Ni's confirmation, Ya Fei's eyebrows leapt up in surprise. She observed the black cloaked figure before her and her face carried a smile. Bringing out the most appeal she could muster, she said, "I didn't think half a year later, uncle would bring us such a large business."

"When will the elixir be sold?" The cloaked figure asked with the voice of Yao Lao.

"Does uncle need money right away? If you are not that busy, then I suggest waiting for 1 or 2 days. 7 bottles of Foundation Elixir rarely come onto the market at the same time. If you would let the Auction House publicize this then your profits will surely be a lot higher..." Ya Fei smiled sweetly while suggesting her idea.

Hearing this, the cloaked figure went silent momentarily and just for a

moment, a light groan in confirmation was heard.

Hearing his response, Ya Fei's smiling face slipped for a second. Her white hands reached for her teacup and she brought it to her lips. She could now ascertain that this black cloaked figure was a rank 2 alchemist, if not a rank 3 alchemist!

Taking a sip from the teacup, the cloaked figure spoke once more with an elderly voice, "Perhaps your auction house could assist in helping me procure some alchemy ingredients as well?"

The bright eyes of Ya Fei twinkled as she sat down on top of a chair. Smiling even brighter, she said, "What ingredients does uncle want?"

"Four 50 year old Ink Leaf Lotuses, two Ripened Snake Venom Fruit, one bundle of 20 year old Spirit Gathering Grass and a single Water Attribute Rank 2 Magic Core..."

By the side of Ya Fei, Gu Ni's face changed drastically upon hearing the ingredients listed. His eyes had a hint of confusion as he watched the black cloaked figure.

"Hehe, Ya Fei will definitely help uncle find those materials. The moment I hear a single mention of any of the items, I will inform uncle immediately. But, where does uncle live I wonder? How will we keep in touch?" As Ya Fei asked, she glanced at Gu Ni and saw shock etched on his face. Seeing that her heart gave a violent leap but she didn't show her surprise on her face.

"There is no need to try to contact me. If any of the ingredients appear, deduct the costs from the Foundation Elixir. I will visit again." Under the black cloak, a wizened voice rang out. "I also have other matters to attend to that cannot be postponed. I will be back in two days." With that said, the cloaked man stood up and walked out of the Auction House.

Watching him disappear as he turned around the corner, Ya Fei's eyes narrowed. "Was there something wrong with the ingredients he asked for, Gu Ni shu-shu?"

Gu Ni shook his head and exhaled before laughing bitterly, "If I

remember correctly, these are the ingredients to refine and make the Qi Gathering Powder.”

Ya Fei’s face changed immediately after hearing that, “Doesn’t one have to be a Rank 4 alchemist before attempting to create the Qi Gathering Powder?”

Nodding his head, Gu Ni continued, “That would appear to be the case. However, within the Jia Ma Empire, there are no more than 20 Rank 4 alchemists. How is it that we’ve never heard of this mysterious cloaked person before?”

Ya Fei gently shook her head, her eyes were brimming with curiosity as she spoke, “A Rank 4 alchemist...if I ever get the chance, I’ll definitely have him owe a favor to me!”

Chapter 55: Accident

Looking at the Primer Auction House's ability to circulate information, one cannot help but admit that it was extremely effective. It had barely been a day since Xiao Yan had handed over his Foundation Elixirs to the Auction house, and yet almost every influential clan in Wu Tan city had already heard the news causing a great disturbance.

The only thing different between this auction and the last was the star of the show. The previous auction showcased the High Level Xuan Dou Technique, a piece which would fetch a sky-high price any day; because of that only the major powers had the qualifications to bid, those of lesser ranks could only watch in longing.

But to many people, the Foundation Elixir was a more realistic goal. To help their children become a Dou Zhe as quickly as possible, many elders of various clans were willing to spend quite a bit on advantageous items like the Foundation Elixirs.

Word of the Foundation Elixirs had spread enough to send the city of Wu Tan abuzz with excitement, even Xiao Yan, deeply secluded within his clan, caught wind of the news. Seeing the commotion over a mere seven bottles of impure Foundation Elixir had caused, though shocked, Xiao Yan was grateful for the being able to confirm the unique charm that the pills had on this continent.

On the second day, the Xiao Clan also received an invitation from the Primer Auction House. Most likely because Xiao Zhan had previously bought a Foundation Elixir. Several elders of the clan were interested in the appearance of the Foundation Elixirs, especially those who still had children whom had yet to achieve the level of Dou Zhes.

Xiao Yan had originally planned to sneak out in the afternoon, but before his plan came to fruition, he was stopped by a messenger from Xiao Zhan. Xiao Yan had no choice but to follow behind the messenger and walk towards the entrance of the clan.

At the entrance, Xiao Yan found not only Xiao Zhan, but also several

elders that were gathered there, all bustling with excitement.

Raising his head to find the leisurely approaching Xiao Yan, a grinning Xiao Zhan urged Xiao Yan to come forward with a gesture of his hand.

Xiao Yan let out a sigh, seeing his father beckon him. As he walked forward, his glance fell upon the two figures next to Xiao Zhan and his eyebrows furrowed at the sight.

“Dilly-dallying, just like a woman.....” Xiao Yu taunted the frowning Xiao Yan. She had been made to wait all day for the ‘princess,’ for this she was slightly angered.

“Are you really in such a rush to your funeral?” Xiao Yan rebutted in a matter-of-fact manner; Xiao Yu to ground her teeth in anger, almost chipping a tooth.

“Pffffttt.” Within the crowd, a young maiden’s mocking laughter rang out like a silver bell.

Tilting his head, Xiao Yan looked to see Xun Er standing in the middle of the crowd. Shrugging his shoulders at her, he smiled back, “Are you going to the Auction House too?”

“Staying within the clan grounds is really boring. I might as well go look around any time I can...” Xun Er squeezed her way through the crowd to stand at Xiao Yan’s side; her beautiful laughter echoing behind her as she walked.

“What’s there for you anyways, except for, well... really at best only a few Foundation Elixirs? Nothing that would be of any use to you will be there.” Xiao Yan asked with a pleasant smile on his face.

“Hmph, YOU still dare to talkback? If it weren’t for those Foundation Elixirs, you’d be no where near my level?” retorted Xiao Ning bitterly, his feet still slightly unsteady since he had had only recently fully recovered. He had just healed from the fight he had with Xiao Yan 2 months ago, but now, as he looked at the two people being ridiculed standing so close to each other, his cheeks reddened with jealousy. It was as if he forgotten the lesson Xiao Yan taught him, after all that pain.

“You still itching for a fight?” Lifting his head to look at him, Xiao Yan’s expression was dangerously unclear, no one could tell if he was smiling or not.

“You...” Xiao Ning’s wrath grew along with the clenching of his fists, but slowly, his fists relaxed and returned to their original state. With a sneer, he followed with: “Don’t be so proud of yourself, although you managed to injure me that time, I still have to thank you for the experience. If it weren’t for this period of healing, I would not have even been able to get close to the 9 Duan Dou Qi. Within 7 days at most, I’ll be able to breakthrough to 9 Duan! After that, we’ll see who’ll be wanting to fight again and who will be the winner!”

Hearing Xiao Ning, some of the surrounding older clansmen couldn’t help but look astonished at his claim. Even the first elder nearby couldn’t hide the pleasant look of pride from his face. Really, this grandson of his never ceased to amaze him.

Xiao Zhan’s eyebrows wrinkled with some annoyance as he looked at the first elder. When he was about to wave his hand to signal for everyone to prepare to leave, he stopped as he saw Xiao Yan’s smiling expression towards Xiao Ning and was momentarily stunned with the words he was about to say died in his mouth.

Facing Xiao Ning, whose face still had that arrogant sneer, Xiao Yan yawned after a moment of silence. Then he shrugged his head and spoke with a neutral tone, “Well...this is quite embarrassing. Just a few days ago, I accidentally...entered the 9 Duan Qi. I’m afraid that it seems like you’re still a step behind.”

“Eh...”

Right after hearing Xiao Yan, all of the surrounding clansmen went silent. Looks of shock and astonishment appeared on everyone’s faces as they watched the impassive face of Xiao Yan. Xiao Yan had said he broke through...by accident?

Not knowing if they should either laugh or cry, everyone all had a similar thought. This kid had deliberately hit Xiao Ning where it hurt

most, poor, poor Xiao Ning...

Xiao Ning's arrogant smirk went rigid as he heard Xiao Yan. His mouth began to twitch slowly, and his throat was trembling. With an unwavering stare at Xiao Yan that lasted for some time, Xiao Ning finally backed down with a dejected look. He had thought that he could gain some face with his expected breakthrough but who would have thought that he was met with an even more shocking statement.

Jade-like hands supported a rather downtrodden Xiao Ning as Xiao Yu glared furiously at Xiao Yan, as if trying to burn holes into him. Surprisingly, she did not say anything to mock him, only thinking to herself: "How exactly does this little bastard train? It was only two months..... how could he have achieved 9th Duan?"

Even though there was bad blood between them, Xiao Yu was still mind-blown at Xiao Yan's rapid progress.

"Haha" A peal of laughter thundered from Xiao Zhan, his previous annoyance fading away as he saw the surprised faces of his clansmen. Casting a glance towards the First Elder, he smiled and said: "Let's get going, the auction is about to start, any more delays and we'll miss our chance."

Watching the elders walk out the main door, Xiao Zhan could not help but turn around and happily ruffle his son's hair. He praised Xiao Yan in a happy tone: "Not bad, you have done your father proud yet again. That old fogey, the first elder, kept going on and on about how much talent his grandson until I almost felt like killing myself in irritation; he obviously wants the clan to invest in a bottle of Foundation Elixir for his grandson. Beating around the bush like that, what a super annoying old cheap-skate."

With his hair ruffled into a mess, Xiao Yan forced a smile. He innocently spread his hands while taking a step out of the main door as he grudgingly replied: "Originally, I didn't want to reveal it but he just had to force my hand....."

At a distance from the door, hearing Xiao Yan's words, Xiao Ning's

mouth twitched as his heart became heavy with gloominess and depression.

Chapter 56: Jia Nan Academy

For the Primer Auction House, today was definitely the busiest day in the past half a year. Inside the expansive and spacious reception lounge, many people were chattering away and moving about which made Xiao Yan's group head hurt with all of the noise. It was as if a large buzzing insect was flying around in their ears and wouldn't leave.

Looking at the crowd so densely packed together that even an ant couldn't get through, Xiao Zhan shook his head helplessly. It would be for the best for the auction house security guards to help escort his group through the VIP entrance. That would be the best way to get in.

Inside the Auction House, although the number of people was definitely not too few, compared to the lounge outside, it was relatively peaceful. Xiao Zhan looked around the bustling floor as he walked along casually with Xiao Yan and some other clan members to find their seats.

Sitting on one of the edge seats, Xiao Yan looked around the hall with a bored expression while leaning back in his chair without a care in the world,

"Elder Sister, in another half a year, the enrollment period of Jia Nan Academy will start right?" Xiao Yan was leisurely sitting and almost fell asleep when his ears picked up the question Xiao Ning had asked. The mentioning of that special name caused his eyebrows to raise slightly in interest.

Jia Nan Academy, a famous Dou Qi Academy in the Dou Qi Mainland, was armed with a strength that wildly exceeds the common man's imagination. It is said that one has to be about Da Dou Shi level to become a teacher in Jia Nan Academy. And, even the famous Misty Cloud Faction cannot match up to the might of Jia Nan Academy.

In the Dou Qi Mainland, Academies are somewhat different from clans. If one joins a clan, he would not only be restricted by the clan but would also have to watch his every action as it would reflect back on the clan. An academy was different since all ties would be cut off after graduation!

Even though that is said, humans are not unfeeling animals. In an ivory tower like the academy, students become easily attached to the academy. After graduating, these faint feelings will become the reason why graduates are willing to support the academy to the best of their abilities.

One person's help might not make much of a difference but if there were thousands or tens of thousands of people helping, that would be quite a scary force..... and this, was the aim of every academy.

Enrolling into an academy was also the best shortcut in obtaining Dou Techniques and Qi Methods. At an academy on the level of Jia Nan, if one's performance was stellar, he might catch the eye of a teacher, which would open up doors to high level Qi Methods and Dou Techniques. With these two in hand, the distance to becoming a strong Dou Zhe would be shortened by quite a bit.

Qi Methods, Dou Techniques and Alchemy Pills are the three most sought after commodities in the Dou Qi Mainland. Jia Nan Academy dominates in two of these fields, thus people all over the mainland believe that if one were able to enter Jia Nan Academy, one would never again need to worry about their future. Everyone who graduates from Jia Nan Academy is a highly sought after talent with bright prospects.

Therefore, every year, countless youths from all over Jia Ma Country try all sorts of ideas in hopes of somehow getting into Jia Nan Academy.

Thus, Jia Nan Academy is definitely a great place, however it's enrolment criterias are extremely strict: To reach the 9th Duan Dou Qi before the age of 18!

These requirements bar many of the less talented people and thus only the truly gifted are left to enter Jia Nan Academy.

.....

Having heard Xiao Ning's inquiry, Xiao Yu gave a slight nod. With a quick glance at Xiao Yan, she proudly replied: "Fret not, you have already fulfilled the criteria. Furthermore the one in charge of recruitment in Wu Tan City is my teacher, who is a 5 star Da Dou Shi. Together with the fact that I am here to put in a word for you, there is definitely no problem for

you at all."

"Haha, that's great." Having heard her reply, Xiao Ning's face lit up like fireworks and nodded his head in excitement.

Hearing their conversation, Xiao Yan's mouth slightly twitched. If it was before, he could only enter Jia Nan Academy in hopes of obtaining higher tier Dou Techniques and Qi Methods. But now, since he had Yao Lao, whose origins remained a mystery, as a teacher, Jia Nan Academy no longer interested him.

"Does Xiao Yan ge-ge not plan to take the entrance test for Jia Nan Academy in half a year?" Xun Er softly asked, having picked up Xiao Yan's lack of interest.

At Xun Er's question, Xiao Yu raised her brow and cast a gaze towards the two, she had already made up her mind that if the little bastard was going to try to go to Jia Nan Academy, she would tell her teacher to make him suffer a bit.

Xiao Yan rubbed his nose and lazily replied: "Not interested. What could I possibly learn with a bunch of wimpy kids? If I wanted Dou Techniques, jumping off cliffs in search for hidden treasures would be more exhilarating."

"Humph, what a boastful tone. Do you really think an Academy would beg for you to join? Don't be so arrogant just because you're blessed with a bit of talent; there are many in Jia Nan Academy who could easily match you. In fact, not entering would be better for you, given your hateful character, all you would find there is a world of beatings." At Xiao Yan's belittlement of the academy she was intensely proud of, Xiao Yu interjected icily as her expression turned frosty.

Xiao Yan turned his sight to sweep over the indignant Xiao Yu, the sides of his mouth slanted downwards, yet he could not be bothered with her. His promise with Nalan Yanran would need to be fulfilled in less than two years. The only goal he had now was to surpass that woman.

There was not much time left but the difference between them was still too vast. Xiao Yan did not believe that there was anyone in Jia Nan

Academy who would be able to help him surpass Nalan Yanran in the two years left.

Since they could not help him, why would he bother to enroll into that lousy academy? Unless they could instruct him in the Alchemy Arts like Yao Lao? But even if they could, could they match up to Yao Lao's skills?

Shaking his head, Xiao Yan decided not to debate with her about academies anymore. Taking a look around, he found that two other large clan's members had also entered the auction.

After yet another crowd had passed by, Xiao Yan suddenly felt a cold gaze. Briefly turning, he realised the owner of the gaze was the one he had clashed with in the marketplace: Jia Lie Ao.

Currently, the young master of the Jia Lie Clan was staring at him with malicious intent while occasionally sneaking lustful glances at the exquisite figure of Xun Er beside him. This caused Xiao Yan to stare back, eliciting an evil smile from the young master.

Coolly staring at Jia Lie Ao whose mouth kept opening and closing, Xiao Yan was barely able to decipher his intentions: "Little useless trash from the Yan Clan, you have finally completed your Coming of Age ritual right? Better not let the young master see you in Wu Tan City or else.... heh heh!"

Slightly squinting at Jia Lie Ao who had burst out into laughter, Xiao Yan faintly smiled as a viscous light flashed in his eyes.

Chapter 57: Advertisement

Releasing his chilly gaze, Xiao Yan did not act but rather curled all ten fingers while a strange push-and-pull force began to gather in his palm; it was if his hands were alive and breathing.

After refining “Vacuum Hand” and “Fire Palm” for more than a year, Xiao Yan, though unable to say his skills had reached perfection, could confidently say that he was able to switch between the two skills much more smoothly. If Xiao Yao sparred with someone, it was assured that he could quickly release the two Dou Techniques together and harm the other party.

Beside him, Xun Er gave a quick glance towards Jia Lie Ao, a small smile creped onto her lips: “Xiao Yan ge-ge, that guy seems to be a lot stronger than before.....”

Xiao Yan inclined his head in agreement, coolly replying: “Last time at the auction, his father managed to win a Wind-Attribute High Xuan Level Qi Method. It’s been a year and that certainly has been enough time for Jia Lie, who is of the wind attribute, to change his old Dou Qi into the new Method’s Dou Qi and thus making him stronger than before.

“Hehe, no wonder he’s become so arrogant. Does he really think that a High Level Xuan Technique is something so rare?” Xun Er was all smiles as she remarked. Within her crystal-clear eyes a light golden blaze danced wildly.

Xiao Yan smiled as he shook his head and with a hint of playfulness he replied: “To a wealthy young girl like you who can pull Qi Methods of High Level Xuan quality out of thin air, of course something like that isn’t rare.”

Hearing Xiao Yan’s teasing words, Xun Er wrinkled her lily-white nose. Rolling her eyes, she replied with some bitterness: “Even though it’s rare, didn’t Xiao Yan ge-ge still reject it?”

Having heard what she said, Xiao Yan smiled in embarrassment. Pointing his chin towards the stage, he said: “The auction is about to start

.....”

Seeing Xiao Yan feign ignorance, Xun Er could only shake her head grudgingly as she cast her gaze towards the auction stage which suddenly lit up.

Under the attention of countless eyes, Ya Fei, dressed in a red dress, stepped up onto the stage. The red dress tightly wrapped around her body, causing the audience's gazes to blaze with passion.

Ya Fei, wearing a lovely expression, veiling her ever so slightly sensual lips behind a hand, faced the audience below and let out her lovable laugh as she said a few words to the crowd. With her charm, she easily drove the auction into a frenzy of desire.

Feeling the growing excitement in the air, even Xiao Yan could not help but smack his lips together. Ya Fei was indeed worthy of the title of Primer Auction House's Chief Auctioneer; with just a few words, she had turned weaker willed men into beasts and filled their heads with passion. At this point, if Ya Fei were to try and auction off a pebble, many people would value the pebble as a priceless treasure to be bought.

Looking at the intense atmosphere in the hall, Ya Fei was slightly pleased with herself. Her years of training had enlightened her on how strongly her beauty effected men. Her red lips formed an inviting smile as her gaze shifted around the room taking in everything around her. When her eyes swept over a young man sitting behind Xiao Zhan, she could not help but be faintly surprised.

Though the youngster's gaze was on the platform, those ink-black eyes which danced around let Ya Fei know that this young man was not swayed by her alluring performance which caused her black eyebrows to lift slightly in astonishment.

Moving her gaze away from Xiao Yan, Ya Fei's red lips slightly parted as a soft laugh escaped. Clapping her hands, she smiled and said: “Ya Fei knows what has brought everyone here today, thus the usual appetisers will be left out. Instead, we will start right away with the main event.”

As she ended her speech, Ya Fei lightly waved her hands, dimming the

lights on the stage. Bowing to the crowd, she took out a jade plate and at the middle of the plate laid a tiny White Jade Bottle.

At the appearance of the tiny White Jade Bottle, the audience's gaze heated up with longing. One by one, they rubbed their hands together in anticipation of obtaining the bottle for themselves.

"Does anyone remember the Foundation Elixir from our last auction? The ones we are offering now are made by the same alchemist. Our Auction House's grandmaster Gu Ni has assured us that the effectiveness and quality are also the same, so everyone need not worry about that." Ya Fei said as she gently smiled. Suddenly turning towards Xiao Yan, with a charming and lovely smile, she added: "Previously, the Foundation Elixir was bought by the Xiao Clan Leader, Xiao Zhan and after this purchase, Young Master Xiao Yan managed to jump from the 3rd to the 8th Duan Dou Qi in one year, whether this was due to the Foundation Elixir..... Haha, Ya Fei can only guess." Towards the end, within Ya Fei's beautiful eyes, a flash of craftiness could be seen.

Hearing Ya Fei's words, all eyes shifted to the front row until they laid upon the slightly overwhelmed figure of Xiao Yan. Gasps of surprise could be heard all around and although word of Xiao Yan's monstrous training speed had long ago spread throughout Wu Tang City, many had not been able to personally see it. Thus having the chance to see Xiao Yan in person, many could not help but sigh in amazement. At the same time, it strengthened everyone's conviction to obtain the Foundation Elixir for themselves.

Not far away, seeing Xiao Yan in the spotlight, the corners of Jia Lie Ao curled into a sneer as his face became filled with disdain.

Under the crowd's attention, Xiao Yan twisted uncomfortably in his seat; in his heart he could not decide whether to cry or laugh. This woman was brilliant, she actually used Xiao Yan himself as a free advertisement. With Xiao Yan here as a living specimen, the price of the Foundation Elixir would rise by at least 20% to 30%.

"Sigh, this woman..... it'd be a waste if she weren't a merchant."

Sighing yet again, although Xiao Yan was disturbed by the surrounding gazes, he remembered that the items on auction were actually his and thus he could only shake his head in frustration and give a death stare to the smiling Ya Fei on stage.

Ya Fei fearlessly ignored Xiao Yan's stare and instead brazenly replied with a mature, lovely and alluring smile, causing a few men behind Xiao Yan to swallow a mouth of saliva.

"For the first bottle of Foundation Elixir, the auction price starts at 15 000!"

On stage, Ya Fei was all smiles as she asked for such a huge amount; she had pushed the price of the Foundation Elixir to twice the original value.

"What viciousness....." Below the stage, having heard the price, Xiao Yan's mouth split open in amazement as he inwardly shook his head. As expected, women were the most vicious beings there were.

Chapter 58: A High Price

Even though everyone in the hall quieted down after Ya Fei announced the starting price, soon, a young man who had been distracted by Ya Fei hurriedly yelled: “16,000!”

Immediately after calling out his price, the slightly pale faced young man tried to act gracefully by faking a bow towards Ya Fei. However, he missed the fact that his eyes were giving conspicuous lust-filled looks at her well formed chest.

Internally sneering at the young man, whose thoughts were obviously fixed on her body, Ya Fei continued to keep her smiling expression and asked the rest of the crowd, “Do we have any other offers? Are there any other takers?”

“17,000!”

“19,000!”

The crowd under the stage erupted with people calling out their prices after that initial offer. The first buyer looked embarrassed after his initial price had been beaten by two or three other people and promptly sat down.

Hearing the nonstop stream of prices, Xiao Yan couldn’t help but feel shocked and could only let out a gasp in his surprise. The buyers wanted the Foundation Elixir to a degree that was far greater than he had anticipated. It would appear that letting the Primer’s Auction House spread word of the Foundation Elixir had been a wise decision after all.

The three major clans held an spectator stance in regards of this Foundation Elixirs and thus weaker parties seized the opportunity and began to scramble to name whatever they would pay. They all wanted to snatch a Foundation Elixirs because, after all, something, such as a Foundation Elixir, that could increase one’s Dou Qi was rare even within the whole of the Jia Ma Empire.

After half an hour of prices being called , the first Foundation Elixir was

sold after the bids began to stall at around 47,000.

Looking at the happy look on the fat buyer's face, Xiao Yan was truly speechless. He didn't think that anyone would want a Foundation Elixir more crazily than his father had... It costed around 1000 gold coins to make just one Foundation Elixir, but here one just sold for ten times that amount. At such large profit margins, Xiao Yan couldn't help but salivate.

Xiao Yan took a moment to ponder, scratching his chin and blinking: if he had never met Yao Lao, would he ever have had the luxury of being able to use the Foundation Elixir every day?

Seeing that the first Foundation Elixir had been sold for such a large price, Ya Fei could only let out a sigh of relief and think to herself, "With such a price, will the mysterious alchemist be satisfied? It would be great if the mysterious alchemist had even a slightly better impression of the Primer Auction House!"

Ya Fei turned back to look at all the people who filled the auction house, after shaking her head out of her thoughts. With a laugh, she stared at the white jade bottles in her hands, "The last 6 Foundation Elixirs will be divided and sold as 3 groups of 2. Each group will have a starting price of 30,000 gold!"

Eyeing each of the two bottles of Foundation Elixir, the people all became strangely quiet. They looked at the 3 major clans standing a distance away for only a moment. But that short moment was all they needed to know that the 3 clans were about to make their move.

"31,000." The Jia Lie clan leader Jia Lie Bi was silent for a second after the price was announced, and then slowly called out his bid.

"Hehe, Jia Lie Bi, did the Qi Method you buy last time empty your clan treasury? How is it that you're so stingy now? Can you even spare 1,000 gold now?" Ao Ba Pa suddenly jeered after hearing Jia Lie Bi's price.

His face twitching slightly, Jia Lei Bi glared at Ao Ba Pa with a single eye. Instead of firing back an insult, he turned his cold gaze back to the white jade bottles onstage.

“35,000.” Yelled out Ao Ba Pa. He mockingly looked at Jia Lei Bi as he gave his bid.

“38,000.” Jia Lei Bi followed suit.

“45,000.” Ao Ba Pa continued to provoke the other clan leader.

“50,000.” By the time this price was called, Jia Lie Bi’s hand had started to tremble. Although it was hard for him to admit it, as Ao Ba Pa had said before, the Jia Lie Clan had used several years of savings to buy the High Level Xuan Qi Method. Thus recently, Jia Lie Clan’s income had already shrunk by more than 20% to 30%.

“55,000.”

“56,000...”

The rest of the audience members could only sigh regretfully at the sight of the two, even if they had enough funds, they still lacked the might to challenge the three great clans. After all, each of the three great clans of Wu Tang City had at least three strong Da Dou Shi level practitioners!

Though economic power was an important pillar that supported a clan, if there was no military might to protect this economic power, with the riches of the world, they would still not be powerful.

Therefore, the rest of the audience tactfully avoided entering the auction battle between these two clans, while occasionally glancing towards the Xiao Clan, who were still sitting on the fence.

When the Foundation Elixir price raised to 73,000, an ashen-faced Jia Lie Bi finally withdrew. With his clan’s current circumstances he could not afford to continue squandering money.

At the sight of the ashen faced Jia Lie Bi, Ao Ba Pa joyfully pulled back his body, a splendid smile lighting up his face.

While the two were battling, Ya Fei observed from the stage while maintaining her alluring smile. Her gaze was similar to that of a wolf eyeing a fat sheep. It was only when the final auction price had been settled that Ya Fei reluctantly let the smaller hammer in her hand smash

downwards.

When Ya Fei once again pushed forward another set of two Foundation Elixirs, the silent Xiao Zhan finally made his move. His indifferent tone sounded out before anyone else, causing the already crestfallen Jia Lie Bi to fall further into depression.

“70,500!” A voice filled with the determination to win flatly resounded throughout the hall.

On the stage, even Ya Fei was taken aback by Xiao Zhan’s drive, taking a little while to recover from her daze, she finally smiled and asked: “Is there anyone else?”

Sitting on his chair, Jia Lie Bi fiercely glared at the smiling Xiao Zhan, cursing in fury to himself: “Bastard, if it was not for him, how would my Jia Lie Clan have fallen to this embarrassing state?”

Flames of rage flickered within his eyes as Jia Lie Bi grinded his teeth and he abruptly shouted with a voice full of bitterness: “85,000!”

“95 000!” Not even bothering to glance at Jia Lie Bi, Xiao Zhan waved his hand, giving the impression that he would be more than able to keep up with any amount Jia Lie Bi could bid.

Seeing that Xiao Zhan was determined to win at all costs, the corners of Jia Lie Bi’s mouth twitched, yet one could see that deep within his eyes, he was happily sneering. It was though he had a bit of hesitation as he clenched his jaw: “100,000!”

Hearing Jia Lie Bi’s bid, the entire hall erupted, using 100,000 gold coins to buy two bottle of Foundation Elixir is insane. It was clearly a big loss.

Carefully scrutinizing Jia Lie Bi who looked like he was ready to fight to the death, Xiao Yan lightly smiled. Shaking his head, he spoke to Xun Er in a low voice: “I bet that if father bids once again, that guy would wash his hands clean of this money loser transaction.”

Xun Er blinked her long eyelashes, she had not payed close attention to the struggle between the two and somewhat startled, she said: “But he looks like he wants it a lot.”

“Hehe” Xiao Yan smiled, he did not need to say another word.

Xiao Zhan sat silently in the front row after having heard Jie Lie Bi's latest bid. Abruptly standing up, he gave Jia Lie Bi a funny look. At the next instant, the suddenly grinning, Xiao Zhan's next words stupefied Jia Lie Bi: “You win... ”

TL: Great dad

Chapter 59: End of the Auction

As the words left Xiao Zhan's mouth, the whole hall fell silent. A while later, one by one, everyone's gazes turned towards the ashen faced Jia Lie Bi, gleeful at the calamity that had befallen him.

"Haha, 100,000 gold coins for two bottles of Foundation Elixir... this guy is truly extravagant." Watching as Jia Lie Bi's face cramped up, Xiao Yan bowed his head in an effort to hide a cheeky smile and muttered.

Seeing the gloating Xiao Yan, Xun Er smiled and, softly laughing, she said: "Normally, a second rank pill would have a market value of at most 30,000 gold. The Foundation Elixir is a wonder drug that is able to increase the speed of Dou Zi Qi training and is relatively rare, thus it's price should be much higher than a second rank pill. However... using 100,000 gold to buy it, this Jie Lie Bi is seriously "extravagant"."

Xiao Yan laughed as he nodded in agreement. He licked his lips in yearning before he smiled and said: "If a bottle of second grade Foundation Elixir could be sold for tens of thousands of gold, doesn't this mean that those great alchemists would be able to swim in gold?"

"Alchemy is the continent's most wealthy profession, this is a fact, every Alchemist owns a generous amount of property." Xun Er was all smiles as she nodded her head. Shifting her gaze towards the Foundation Elixirs on stage, she continued: "As an Alchemist's rank rises, they don't auction off their products often. Instead they would rather choose to engage in bartering, as money no longer has value to them..."

"Bartering?" Xiao Yan's eyebrows perked up and realized that he gained a little insight as to why Yao Lao had such an abundant secret treasure stash.

"Yeah, they use things like Dou Techniques, Qi Methods, rare alchemy ingredients or high level Monster Cores to trade for such pills." The corners of her rosy lips tilted upwards, forming a smile as Xun Er continued her lecture, "As a result, it is often said that the Alchemist is the most envied profession in the continent. All people dream to become an

alchemist but those dreams are often shattered by the harsh and unreachable requirements.”

Eyeing the somewhat regretful Xun Er, Xiao Yan rubbed his nose, grateful for the mutation in his soul.

Deciding not to further the conversation, Xiao Yan turned his sight towards the ashen faced Jia Lie Bi.

Similarly, Jia Lie Bi was shocked into a daze by Xiao Zhan’s words, he stared stupidly at Xiao Zhan who had so easily given up on the bidding war as the corners of his eye’s twitched in disbelief. It felt like half a day had passed before it finally dawned upon him. Jia Lie Bi hoarsely croaked: “Bastard, you tricked me again! It was all an act!”

“Hehe, weren’t you trying to do the same, except that recently your mind was a tad distracted and your acting, it’s..... too fake.” Xiao Zhan smugly laughed, his tone full of mockery.

“Good, good, very good, extremely good, the best, Xiao Zhan, I, Jia Lie Bi will remember those words!” Jia Lie Bi continued to gasp out a few breathes in fury, his gaze cold and venomous.

Xiao Zhan ignored his threat, with a final sneer he turned to face Ya Fei and said: “Mistress Ya Fei, let us start the last auction.”

Nodding her head, Ya Fei smiled as she maintained her impartial expression. Yet inside, she was giddy with laughter at this turn of events. This auction had exceeded her wildest expectations and the better the profits, the more the mysterious alchemist would favor the auction house.

Gracing the ashen faced Jia Lie Bi with a consoling smile, Ya Fei once again bent to retrieve the last two bottles of Foundation Elixir. Complementing her rosy lips with a dazzling smile, she announced: “Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the last batch of elixirs, likewise, the starting bid is 30 000.”

At the sight of the final batch of elixirs, the few elders in Xiao Zhan’s vicinity trembled and hurriedly gazed at Xiao Zhan with obvious intentions.

Calmly sitting in his chair, Xiao Zhan took no notice of the elders signals. Instead his gaze looped around the auction house, coming around full circle before he finally announced in an icy tone: “50 000.”

Having heard Xiao Zhan’s bid, Jia Lie Bi’s face tightened as his mouth instinctively started to open, yet at the thought of his current financial crisis, he could only shut it regretfully.

In another corner Ao Ba Pa kept eying the stoic Xiao Zhan. Furrowing his brow and thrumming his fingers against the back of his hand, Ao Ba Pa’s eyes faintly flickering in movement of revelation. In a moment, he faintly smiled and said “55,000”

The three great clans of Wu Tang City had a strange relationship, each wanted to consume the other two’s businesses, yet each feared to act out against the other clan, for the neutral clan would gain from them doing so. Yet even if two of them joined hands, they could not avoid suspecting their ‘partner’. Thus unless they were assured of completely wiping out one party, all three sides could only continue in this complicated and brittle stalemate that had formed between them.

Each of the three great clans had their own set of grudges; each could not stand the sight of another. Even though before, Ao Ba Pa had mocked and ridiculed Jia Lie Bi and now that Xiao Zhan was bidding, Ao Ba Pa was more than willing to compete with Xiao Zhan so that Xiao Clan would lose a bit more money.

Ao Ba Pa’s bid didn’t make Xiao Zhan face change expression. With a casual glance, Xiao Zhan called out, “65,000.”

65,000 was a bit too much for the regular market price for a Foundation Elixir but Xiao Zhan was also knew in deep down that in this 3 way struggle between the clans, it would be impossible to buy a Foundation Elixir for a low or even fair price.

“Hehe, the Xiao Clan Leader sure is extravagant but I’m afraid of being be tricked by you. I already have Foundation Elixir, so I’ll give this one to you.” After Xiao Zhan’s bid, Ao Bo Pa had started to hesitate. It would seem that after the Jia Lei Bi’s huge loss, he had become even more

cautious.

Xiao Zhan gazed at Ao Ba Pa and relaxed in his chair while giving out a laugh. The smile, or whatever Ao Ba Pa had plastered on his face was obviously not what the man was feeling. Regardless, Xiao Zhan still let out a grumble afterward: “Dammit, I had to pay an extra 10,000. This bastard is nothing good.”

Hearing those words, Xiao Yan thought that it was comical. In this kind of battle, were there any good men? If the other party did not fear of ending up in a predicament like Jia Lie Bi, he would have definitely continued to raise the bid even more before finally letting the matter drop.

Tapping his fingers, Xiao Yan directed his gaze upon the stage at Ya Fei, who had just brought down the small hammer, signalling the end of the auction. Inwardly, he let out a sigh of relief, this sum of money would be enough for a period of time. Now, all that was left were the alchemy ingredients and for Yao Lao to refine the Qi Gathering Powder...

“Soon, I’ll be a Dou Zhe...”

Xiao Yan licked his lips and let out a long sigh, the first obstacle in his training journey was about to be overcome!

Chapter 60: Ingredients Obtained

Seeing that the auction was about to end, Xiao Yan found an excuse to sneak away.

After carefully leaving the auction floor, Xiao Yan walked along a nearby street for a little bit. He made his way towards a secluded corner and donned the big, black cloak he had previously purchased. Wrapping himself up in the bulky cloak inhibited his movements, so he could only slowly return to the auction floor.

Ever since Ya Fei had identified him as a 4th tier alchemist, she had stationed an informant on the auction floor to watch for any signs of the mysterious man.. Consequently, as soon as Xiao Yan arrived, there was already a delicate and pretty maiden that had been waiting who led him to the back and carefully waited on him.

Silently sitting in his chair, Xiao Yan lifted the teacup on the table to his lips and took a sip. He took a quick glimpse at the timid maiden next to him and faintly nodded his head. The voice of an old man could be heard even though Xiao Yan's lips never moved: "How much longer until the auction ends?"

"Ah!" The sudden question made the maiden jump. Xiao Yan, enshrouded behind a large black cloak, was given a concealed look by the girl. She then, with a pale face, tightly clenched her small hands and nervously replied., "Sir, the auction has already ended; Ya Fei is handling the transfer procedure."

Xiao Yan couldn't help but feel puzzled when he saw the maiden; she looked like a startled hare. He wasn't that scary, was he? Reluctant to accept that possibility, he shook his head and continued in silence.

Standing to the side with her head bowed, the girl looked at the once again silent Xiao Yan and secretly let out a breath. She had been warned by Master Gu Ni, when she had taken on this task, to never hesitate to satisfy any request this mysterious person may have –even if that request was to do something 'extra'.

Having worked at the auction floor for a year, the young girl obviously understood what these ‘extra tasks’ would require. This was why, everytime Xiao Yan spoke, she would shiver from head to toe. She was afraid that this mysterious man might request one of those... ‘extra tasks’.

The girl stood trembling for about 10 minutes, after which footsteps could be heard outside the door. She was finally able to relax a little bit.

“Oh, sir, you arrived really early. Xue Li should’ve entertained you properly right?” Ya Fei’s serpentine waist swayed and she released an alluring demeanor as she slowly walked into the room. Her curvy figure could make men with little self-control feel fiery impulses.

“Succubus...” His heart once again cried out. Xiao Yan withdrew backwards, and lightly nodded.

Watching Xiao Yan nod, the maiden standing to the side once again released a breath. She respectfully bowed and quickly left.

Seeing that Xiao Yan’s appearance had no trace of dissatisfaction, Ya Fei felt relieved. She gave him a smile that contained heaven’s charm.

Her smile gave Xiao Yan an electrifying jolt. When interacting with this enchantress, Xiao Yan didn’t dare let down his guard. Under the cloak, he stroked the unadorned black ring, hurriedly handing over the responsibility of speaking to Yao Lao.

“Has the auction ended?”

“Yes.” Ya Fei wore a smiling expression as she nodded her snow white chin. Ya Fei waved her hand and a light blue jade card appeared in her hand. She laughed, “Sir, these 7 foundation elixirs, all together auctioned off for 285,000 gold coins. After deducting taxes, the rest of the money is on this card.”

Xiao Yan reached forward and took the card. It rested comfortably in his hand and was clearly expensive to make. He lightly caressed the jade card and nodded.

Looking at the pair of young and fair palms, Ya Fei once again had a strange feeling.

“This price is beyond my expectations. I am very satisfied...”

Yao Lao’s voice made Ya Fei feel pleased. She quickly discarded any strange thoughts. Staring with her alluring eyes, she pursed her rosy lips and laughed, “If you still want to auction medicine later, please come to the Primer Auction House; we will definitely strive to get you the best price.”

Nodding his head, Xiao Yan put away the jade card. After a slight hesitation, Yao Lao’s voiced inquired, “The ingredients I requested, did you find them?”

Her long and narrow eyebrows bent in a beautiful arc, Ya Fei lightly laughed. The lovable tone made Xiao Yan feel somewhat pleasantly surprised.

“Yes, our auction house naturally fulfilled your request.”

Ya Fei clapped her hands, and Gu Ni personally stepped forward holding a jade plate. Then he stopped by Xiao Yan’s side and bowed. He carefully placed the jade plate onto the table and laughed, “Sir, the ingredients you have requested are all here.”

Xiao Yan’s eyes lit up in happiness when he looked at the plate full of ingredients beside him. This auction house’s power was nothing small. If he were to try and buy these ingredients himself, he would have wasted a lot of time and energy. But here, this auction house was able to gather everything in a single day. This left Xiao Yan overjoyed at his unexpected fortune.

“Hmm, sorry for the trouble...” Seeing all the materials for Qi Refining Powder gathered, even Yao Lao’s indifferent voice grew a little soft.

Having interacted with many people at the auction floor for many years, Ya Fei was naturally able to distinguish Yao Lao’s softer tone. She was pleasantly surprised. This transaction was the right decision!

“I don’t want to take advantage of you. The money for these ingredients; subtract it from this card.”

Seeing that Xiao Yan was about to bring out the card again, Ya Fei

immediately laughed, “Sir, we obtained these ingredients internally. The price is much cheaper compared to what you would find outside. Your two auctions gained a lot of reputation for our auction house. How could we dare take money for these things?”

“Fine, let’s do it your way. If I need more ingredients in the future, I will exchange pills with you.” Nodding his head, the astute Yao Lao understood that she wanted to create a good relationship. Not wanting to argue with her, Xiao Yan carefully picked up the jade plate and stored its contents away.

“Okay, I have other business to attend to and will not stay any longer.”

Seeing that everything had been stored, Xiao Yan stood up. He shook his hands and headed directly outside.

“Sir, Ya Fei will accompany you.” Ya Fei winked at Gu Ni. The two of them stepped forward to lead the way.

Xiao Yan followed these two auction managers who graciously led the way and walked out of the back room. He raised his head and slowed down.

As they were leaving the back room, a group of three people across the auction floor also emerged. Sweeping his eyes over the three people, Xiao Yan couldn’t help but nervously tug on his cloak. He realized that the person in the middle was his father Xiao Zhan.

“Please don’t let him see me...” Prayed Xiao Yan.

Chapter 61: Disguise

While the three clans began to leave through the entrance of the auction house, the respective clan leaders gave phony smiles and unpleasant laughs; as they left each other's sights, a trace of hostility and mockery appeared on their faces.

The three clans swaggered across the hall as they left and whenever they passed by, the people would quickly move aside.. In Wu Tang City, there were virtually no other powers that could rival the three great clans.

Once again, Xiao Zhan half-heartedly said a few words to the nearby Ao Ba Pa. Suddenly, Xiao Zhan's movements stiffened and his footsteps halted.

Looking at Xiao Zhan's movements, everyone shifted their gazes to his line of sight, and their bodies could not help but tremble slightly. Even Jie Lie Bi and Ao Ba Pa's faces changed a bit.

At the hall's other entrance, three figures slowly walked out. The person leading them was unexpectedly Primer Auction House's chief auctioneer Ya Fei. As frequent customers of the auction, Xiao Zhan and others all knew this woman's true face. Although this woman usually puts on an appearance filled with smiles, everyone knew that this woman was actually very arrogant. Previously, Ao Ba Pa wanted to invite her to have a meal but was directly met with an exceptionally "polite" refusal. From this incident, people understood that this woman, unlike her outward appearance, was not easy to get close to.

Today however, this haughty woman, contrary to her normal self, was respectfully guiding guests. This really did make Xiao Zhan and the others amazed.

Eyes blinking a little, Xiao Zhan and the others' gaze shifted once more to the rear and their faces continued to change.

At the back of the group of three, the Auction's alchemist elder Gu Ni was smiling and said a few words into the ears of a mysterious black-hooded person. His smiling expression was all over his face, so much so

that a trace of flattery could be seen.

If Ya Fei's deferential attitude had caused Xiao Zhan and the others to feel amazed, then the attitude Gu Ni displayed made them feel stunned.

As Wu Tan City's highest ranked alchemist, usually only the three clan heads could meet him. When they did, they were respectful and did not dare to be impolite in the slightest.

As a 2nd tier alchemist, Gu Ni maintained that pride of being an alchemist. When he spoke, he spoke indifferently, making others revere him even more.

But this type of person, he unexpectedly showed such respect without even trying to hide his flattering smiles. That that person he's trying to win the favor of.. Who could this person be?

The sight brought shock. Finally, their gazes slowly shifted onto the center's black-cloaked figure.

Sweeping over the shadowy figure's plump stature, Xiao Zhan anxiously thought in his mind, "Who is this person? Someone who can make Primer Auction House's most important people respectfully send him off? What would a person of this level come to Wu Tan City for?"

Licking his somewhat dry lips, Xiao Zhan looked around from left to right and actually found that Jia Lie Bi and Ao Ba Pa were also curious and shocked.

Raising his eyes expectantly at the three incoming people, Xiao Zhan's face squeezed out a small smile, walked forward two steps, and smiled: "Lady Ya Fei, Gu Ni elder. Ha ha. It really is rare to see you two appear together."

When Ya Fei and Gu Ni came out earlier, the two had already caught sight of the clan leaders. Looking at Xiao Zhan coming out to speak, their movements were still the same. But only after the black-cloaked person stopped did they heave a sigh of relief.

"Ha ha. We're sending off a precious guest, that's all." Ya Fei lightly laughed.

“Oh. Ha ha...” Jia Lie Bi also approached smiling. Shortly after, his gaze shifted from Ya Fei to the black-hooded person and politely asked: “Ha ha. I don’t know if this mister is also from Wu Tang City? Ha ha, you look somewhat unfamiliar to me.”

“Cough ... Jia Lie Clan Elder, this mister is Primer Auction House’s precious guest” Gu Ni elder’s eyebrows furrowed and coughed to warn Jia Lie Bi to not ask questions carelessly .

Hearing Gu Ni elder’s warning tone, Jia Lie Bi’s complexion slightly changed and whispered to himself: “Even Gu Ni elder acts this fearfully? What is this person’s identity?”

Seeing how Jia Lie Bi was met with a tactful retort, Xiao Zhan swallowed what he was about to say. Looking at Gu Ni’s cautious stance, this black-cloaked person was obviously on a completely different level of existence from them. At the moment, he had no choice but to laugh a bit and then tactfully withdraw.

“You are Xiao Zhan of the Xiao Clan, right?” Just when Xiao Zhan was about to withdraw, the silent black-cloaked person suddenly asked in a dull tone.

Hearing this elderly voice, Xiao Zhan stared blankly a bit. Soon after, he hesitated and then nodded.

“I heard that the young master of your clan relied on this Foundation Elixir to leap to the 9th Duan Qi. Ha ha, this really causes me to be in awe.” The black-cloaked person laughed dully.

Met with this sort of courteous treatment, Xiao Zhan felt delight in his heart and smiled: “My son has good luck.”

Waving his hands in a carefree manner, the black-cloaked person smiled: “Luck is also part of one’s power. In the future if there is ever an opportunity, I would like to meet him. Maybe he can even become an alchemist.”

In a somewhat stunned manner, Xiao Zhan appeared as if he did not understand what the elder was saying.

"Ok.... in the future if there is ever an opportunity, I will look for your Xiao Clan to collaborate together." Smiling, the black-cloaked person turned around to face Ya Fei and Gu Ni: "There's no need to send me off, I still have some business to do. I will leave first."

After speaking, Xiao Yan didn't wait for their reactions and walked in big strides out of the auction house.

Stroking his face in an ineffable way, Xiao Zhan turned his head and actually saw Ya Fei and Gu Ni staring at him, faces filled with envy.

"Xiao Clan Leader, do you recognize that old mister?" Ya Fei asked.

"It was my first time seeing him." Xiao Zhan forced a smile and shook his head nervously towards Ya Fei and Gu Ni, who held strange expressions on their faces.

"Sigh, the Xiao family has been blessed."

Gu Ni gently shook his head. He shot a glance at the Foundation Elixirs, which Jia Lie Bi held tightly to his chest as if they were precious treasures, and said indifferently: "Those things were refined by him."

Having heard what was said, the complexions of the three family heads changed wildly.

After a short while, Xiao Zhan's face lit up with delight; he hadn't expected that the black-cloaked elder would be an alchemist. Looking at Gu Ni's previous attitude, it was clear that the elder was a much higher ranked alchemist than even Gu Ni!

If a second tier alchemist was able to make them courteous and modest, then what about a third or even a fourth tier alchemist?

Heavens, his kind of clan did not have the qualifications to even meet this type of senior.

"We've profited greatly this time...." Thinking back to when that black-hooded person offered to collaborate in the future, Xiao Zhan's two eyes immediately lit up and he involuntarily mumbled to himself.

To the side, after their shock faded, Jia Lie Bi and Ao Ba Pa's eyes flashed

with envy as if they were like rabbit's eyes.

TL: Rabbit eyes are red = red eyes = envy

Chapter 62: Slap

Leaving the auction house, Xiao Yan wandered the streets for some time. When he saw that there weren't too many people around him, he slipped into a nearby alley. Taking off his black cloak, Xiao Yan grumbled: "Teacher, you almost exposed me back there."

"Hehe, what I just did; wasn't that what your heart desires as well?" From the unadorned, pitch-black ring resounded an amused Yao Lao's laugh.

These words caused Xiao Yan to helplessly shake his head, but it was true that he felt a bit apologetic towards his father. Twice he had auctioned some products and thus twice he had extorted money from Xiao Zhan. He kicked the cloak into the gutter, whispering: "I'll make it up to him by finding an opportunity to collaborate with the Xiao Clan in the future. That should net him a bit of compensation."

With prized ingredients in hand, Xiao Yan stuffed them inside his bosom. After exiting the alley, he practically flew back to the Xiao Clan's residence.

Since Xiao Zhan and company weren't back yet, the place felt kind of empty. The guards at the gate, seeing the Xiao Clan's super-duper talented young master, didn't dare obstruct him. Seeing their behavior, the young master flashed a smile and then dashed in.

With a vigorous dash, Xiao Yan arrived at his own room and took out the ingredients out of his bosom. He treated the ingredients as one would treasure. Cupping his hand, he scooped them out and placed them on the table.

The first was a withered yellow plant with five ink-black leaves. That was the Inkleaf Lotus; each leaf represented 10 years of age.

The Snake Venom Fruit was round and about as big as half a fist. If the dark-green fruit was put beneath the nose, one would smell a sweet and sour tanginess. The Snake Venom Fruit was quite rare, being found only near the lairs of 5th Rank or above snake magical beasts! Due to the fruit's

association with the snake, the fruit's cold yin element was abundant and as a result, the fruit was frequently used as a mediator for the effects of a medicine.

TL: Yin and Yang, Yin is the “dark” side.

Spirit Gathering Grass, despite mostly looking like normal grass, had a small, yellow light at the tips. The stronger the light, the more pure the grass' energy.

The Rank 2 Water Attribute Magic Core had a rich, azure-blue color. When put on the table, it not only moisturized the surrounding air but also drenched the table! Needless to say, the water property of the core was evident.

After his eyes swept across the ingredients once more, Xiao Yan used a low voice to impatiently ask: “Teacher, all the ingredients are present. Can we start refining?”

“Why are you so impatient, it’s not like the ingredients are going to sprout feet and run away. We can’t be interrupted while refining, it’s still light out. What if by some off-chance, somebody comes in and we’re interrupted? Someone would learn about me and the ingredients would go to waste.” Within the ring, Yao Lao rang out: “It’s better to refine at night.”

Hearing these words, Xiao Yan dejectedly shook his head and let out a sigh. What else could he do other than hide the ingredients in a cupboard, lie on his bed and wait for night to descend?

After lying for about half an hour, his door was abruptly kicked open with a “bang!”

A pair of sexy, slender legs walked in. Turns out it was Xiao Yu. She scanned the room and seeing that Xiao Yan was napping, she coldly injected: “Young master, dinner isn’t going to eat itself. Do you expect to receive an invitation or something?”

The process of Xiao Yan shifting from nap mode to full alert barely took a moment. Sitting upright on the bed, he looked dazedly at Xiao Yu and after quite a while, he broke into a cold sweat: “Damn it, damn it, good

thing teacher didn't start the refining process a while ago; this b*tch..."

Thinking about the "what if" situation caused Xiao Yan's heart tremble; one could almost hear the "gulp" resounding from his throat. However, after shifting his gaze to Xiao Yu, he started to feel rage boil from within.

The corners of his mouth twitched, and then Xiao Yan took a long breath, finally calming down. As for the fear he felt a while ago, it was converted to fury: "Idiot, do you know what manners are? Are you smart enough to enter but too dumb to knock?! Where's your upbringing?!"

This was the first time Xiao Yu saw an outwardly furious Xiao Yan and as a result she could only look on like an idiot. His stream of verbal abuse caused her charming face to ashen and at the same time she nipped her silver tooth. Then the pair of sexy legs moved, in fact charged, directly towards Xiao Yan: "Little bastard, I kicked your door down. So what? From now on I'll be kicking it down every day!"

With Xiao Yu charging at him, wanting to teach him a lesson, Xiao Yan was ashen-faced as well. He lifted up his palm and clenched it: "Vacuum Palm!"

A strong suction force rushed towards Xiao Yan's palm, causing the assaulter, who attempted to stop just in front of the bed to instead land on top of it.

After attaining 9 Duan Dou Qi, Xiao Yan's Vacuum Palm's suction strength increased by quite a bit. A few days ago, moving the body weight of a person was simply unfathomable, but now it was quite possible.

Although Xiao Yan was a bit surprised by the increase in efficacy, the feeling didn't last long and quickly turned into indignation. With a flip of his body, he managed to subdue that pair of sexy legs and shortly after, he ruthlessly pressed his butt against her flat and smooth, jade-like underbelly and then quickly leaned over to press down both of his hands to restrain her hands.

Finding herself once again in such an embarrassing posture with Xiao Yan caused Xiao Yu to feel a bit dazed. After a moment, that attractive face flushed red in a most alluring fashion and a violent struggle ensued.

Xiao Yu once again bit her silver tooth, cursing in a rage: "Little bastard, go away!"

Due to the struggle to lock her two palms in place, Xiao Yan's also felt quite tired. At the start of another bout, he suddenly gave way and pulled Xiao Yu's palm, causing her to flip over.

After the flip, Xiao Yu's back was arched as her long legs stretched out over the bed.

But Xiao Yan wasn't in the mood to check them out. He gnashed his teeth, raised up a hand, and without hesitation, slapped downwards

"Pa!"

The crisp sound fluttered inside the room and then into oblivion.

"Learned your lesson yet? Don't enter my room without knocking first!"

Chapter 63: The Heavenly Flames Ranking

At the dining table, Xiao Yan shot a crooked glance at the ferocious eater sitting in front of him. As Xiao Yu ate, her silver teeth made crunching sounds. Curling his lips, Xiao Yan recalled the previous peculiar yet splendid feeling and his right hand's fingers couldn't help but stroke the hollow of his palm.

Seated across from him, Xiao Yu, who had been staring maliciously at Xiao Yan the entire time, saw his movements and her charming face turned red again.

Looking weirdly at Xiao Yu grinding her teeth, and then seeing the nearby Xiao Yan's nonchalant attitude, Xun Er wrinkled her eyebrows in suspicion. Soon after, she shook her head helplessly, and little by little swallowed the food in front of her.

Xiao Yan's gaze skipped over Xiao Yu and stopped on the body of Xiao Ning. At this moment, Xiao Ning's face was filled with joy; the curves on his mouth almost extended halfway across his face. Fingers lightly tapping the edge of the table, Xiao Yan, taking delight in other people's misfortunes thought to himself: "This guy should have already received the Foundation Elixir, right? Little does he know, the elixir doesn't have much of an effect to those at 8th Duan Qi or above..."

Laughing quietly to himself, Xiao Yan's line of sight swept over the surroundings in a somewhat bored manner. Looking at his smiling father, his heart was bewildered: "The family communal meal, isn't it only held during certain holidays? What's there to be so festive for today? Could it be that spending a large amount of money to buy the Foundation Elixir is an event worthy of being celebrated?"

Letting his imagination run wild, Xiao Yan naturally didn't know that this family communal meal was because of the words said by the mysterious black-cloaked person about collaborating with Xiao Clan if there was ever an opportunity to.

Working together with a second tier or higher alchemist would earn

them profits that would make most people's eyes red with envy. It was even possible that the family could thereby leap up in rank, rising higher than the other two great families. Thus, it was no surprise that the usual steady and calm father would be so happy. And for those several other elders, they were even more so, grinning from ear to ear. Looking at their half closed old eyes, it was evident that this good fortune that had dropped out of the sky made them somewhat dazed.

The festive mood at the communal meal slowly faded and upon seeing his father's wave of farewell, Xiao Yan promptly jumped out of his chair. He then rushed out of the hall and went straight to his room.

Not long after Xiao Yan left, Xiao Yu clenched her teeth and chased after him but could not find a single shadow. Helpless, she could only stamp her feet in hatred and left with a heart filled with rage.

.....

Returning to his room and having learned the hard way from his own personal experience, Xiao Yan did not yet ask Lao Yao to immediately refine the medicine. After closing the door and window, he lazily rolled onto his bed and feeling muddle-headed, fell asleep.

Late at night, after everyone had fallen asleep, lying on the bed, Xiao Yan opened his two eyes. He eagerly jumped off the bed and took out the hidden away ingredients from the cupboard. Carefully placing them on the table, he turned his head. Looking towards Yao Lao, the ghost that was floating a foot off of the ground, Xiao Yan gently asked: "Teacher, you're ready now, right?"

"At long last you've learned how to be a bit careful; refining pills requires an extremely quiet environment. If I am disturbed, the consequences are very severe. Right now, I won't feel any retaliation damage, but later when you begin learning alchemy, if you continue to be careless, then I'm afraid you will lose your little life a bit sooner rather than later." Yao Lao walked to one side of the table and gently touched each ingredient with his ghostly palm. Nodding his head slightly, his dull tone of voice carried a little bit of severity.

Lowering his head in shame, Xiao Yan scratched his head as he received the instructions.

Only after seeing Xiao Yan's obedience, did Yao Lao heave a sigh of relief. He drearilly spread out his palms and a white flame burst forth.

With his soul perception continuously controlling the fire's temperature, Yao Lao took advantage of the idle time and cast a glance at Xiao Yan who was staring curiously at the fire in Yao Lao's palm. Slightly hesitating, Yao Lao quietly whispered: "The ranks of most alchemists can be distinguished from the color of their flame."

"Ordinary alchemists have flames with a faint yellow color. As their rank increases, the flame color turns darker and the strength of the flame grows stronger."

Having heard what was said, Xiao Yan blinked, pointed at the flame in Yao Lao's hands and asked: "Then teacher, why is yours white?"

"Haha, what I previously said was for the commonly-seen alchemist flames. However within the alchemist circle, besides relying on Dou Qi as a catalyst for the flame, there is also another method...." Yao Lao smiled with a hint of pride.

"That is, borrowing the flame!"

"Borrowing the flame?" They weren't unfamiliar words. He understood what each word meant, but Xiao Yan was at a loss. How can one borrow the flame needed to refine pills?

"That's right, borrowing the flame." Nodding his head, Yao Lao chuckled: "Within this boundless world, there exists some heaven and earth Heavenly Flames. Perhaps the flame came from within a meteor that fell from the heavens or perhaps the flame came from the depths of a volcano, forged through hundreds of thousands of years by the lava... the power of these Heavenly Flames is many times greater than the power of flames created through Dou Qi. Refining pills with these flames can even increase the effectiveness of the medicine. Only, these heaven and earth Heavenly Flames are exceedingly violent and are seldom to come by. And even if you see one, it is extremely difficult to control."

“A lot of alchemists spend their entire lives searching for these Heavenly Flames and still fail to obtain one. After all, in order to control a Heavenly Flame, you need to bring the flame into your body; however, the nature of the flame is wildly destructive. Even the Magic Gold Diamond which is one of the hardest metals, is unable to contain the Heavenly Flame’s heat and your fragile human body You would burn yourself alive. Therefore, only the extremely few lucky winners can, by chance, refine a small amount of Heavenly Flame. Once the flame join together with the body, these types of people, without an exception are people of outstanding talent within the alchemist world.”

Stunned for a long while, Xiao Yan licked his lips, his gaze was closely watching the white flame in Yao Lao’s palm and could faintly feel an ice-cold sensation.

“Teacher’s flame must be a type of Heavenly Flame, right?” Xiao Yan inquired.

“He he.” Lifting up his flame, Yao Lao’s face gave off a light glow. Eyes blazing, he spoke: “In the Dou Qi Mainland’s alchemist society, the known Heavenly Flames are ranked in the “Heavenly Flames Ranking”. There are a total of 23 types and my flame is ranked 11, known as the “Bone Chilling Flame”. This type of Heavenly Flame only appears every hundred years, when the eclipse occurs in the extreme cold and extreme Yin intersect.....”

“Bone Chilling Flame?”

Without blinking, Xiao Yan stared at that surging white flame and softly murmured to himself.

Chapter 64: Creation of the Qi Gathering Pill

“To obtain the “Bone Chilling Flame”, I had waited in a place without light for eight long years, and when the moment to assimilate the flame finally came, despite all my preparations I was nearly burnt to ashes.....” Yao Lao sighed as he shook his head; a rare lingering fear could be seen on his normally serene face. Looks like that encounter had left a strong impression on him.

“Hehe, although it was extremely dangerous, having obtained the “Bone Chilling Flame” in the end, it was all worth it.” Yao Lao proudly declared as he waved about the white flame in the palm of his hand as if showing it off to a large crowd. He then smiled as he continued to elaborate: “With a Heavenly Flame, not only can you refine pills of better quality, but also, when encountering a foe of the same level he would not be a match for you.”

Hearing this, Xiao Yan gazed at that raging dull-white flame, his face filled with envy.

Seeing that envious look on Xiao Yan’s face, Yao Lao let out a laugh as a devious expression flashed across his face. His tone changed as he said: “Something like a Heavenly Flame is still a long way off for you. For now, your greatest wish should be to become a Dou Zhe as soon as possible.”

Feeling regretful, Xiao Yan nodded his head. He could only temporarily slurp back the drool that had formed due to his longing for the Heavenly Flame and drag himself back to face reality.

Yao Lao lightly smiled at the sight of Xiao Yan coming back to his senses. At the center of his hand, the white flame continued to burn as wisps escaped to soar up into the air, only to dissipate shortly after.

A dry hand picked up a stalk of Ink-leaf Lotus and gently dropped it into the flame.

As the Ink-leaf Lotus came into contact with the “Bone Chilling Flame”,

it was instantly burned into the form of an ink-black liquid which rolled about within the flame, revealing its hidden luster.

The white flame churned as it grew more and more intense, yet Xiao Yan noticed that strangely, the air surrounding the white flame grew colder and colder.

Yao Lao was concentrating all his attention into controlling the temperature of the flame within his palm. If the temperature were just a slight bit higher, the ink-black liquid would be evaporated into nothingness.

After the temperature of the flame was maintained at a certain point for a period of time, specks of yellow impurity suddenly appeared within the ink-black liquid.

Gazing at the yellow specks of impurity, Yao Lao finally gave a slight nod. With a light flick of his finger, the yellow specks gathered and separated with some of the ink-black liquid into a smaller ball of liquid and was expelled from the main body.

After expelling the yellow impurities, other tiny light yellow impurities started appearing one after another. Likewise, these impurities were cleaned up by Yao Lao.

The white flame continued to burn, within it, the ink-black liquid which was originally half a fist large had shrunk to a mere thumb size amount.

Deep black liquid rolled about at the center of the white flame, like a black pearl, serene and mysterious.

When the first stalk of Ink-leaf Lotus was the size of a thumb, Yao Lao finally stopped calcining. He continued by dropping the other four stalks into the flame, calcining them into four black pearl-like balls of pure liquid.

After a long period of purification by the “Bone Chilling Flame”, five small bodies of fluid slowly fused together. At the moment of fusion, the volume expanded by a large extent, however, a split second later, it shrunk to only a thumb size.

Having spent a long time rolling about in the white flame, it was as if within the inky-blackness of the liquid, a small white flame could be seen dancing about.

Seeing this, in one fluid motion Yao Lao quickly grabbed the Snake Venom Fruit on the table and threw it into the flame.

Once the Snake Venom Fruit entered the flame, it was transformed into a dark green fluid which emitted traces of icy air. Removing the impurities from the dark green fluid, Yao Lao gradually covered the dark green fluid with the now burning ink-black fluid.

“Zi! Zi!.....”

Strange noises echoed about as the two liquids of different attributes met and a white smoky plume rose from within the raging flame.

As the plume of smoke given off gradually decreased, a rough pill-like object started to form from within the flame.

Gazing serenely upon the almost formed pill, Yao Lao slightly inclined his head. Once again he threw the Spirit Gathering Grass and the Water Attribute Rank 2 Magic Stone into the flame.

Melt into liquid, remove impurities, fuse together..... these three types of actions were complicated procedures which required a meticulous effort. Yet Yao Lao managed to accomplish all of them as if they were a single fluid motion, not even stopping a single time.

Having seen Yao Lao’s sharp and precise movements, even Xiao Yan, an outsider to the Alchemist ways who had yet to understand even the basics of the art could not help but praise Yao Lao in his heart.

Neutralizing the rampaging power in the Magic Stone with the Spirit Gathering Grass, the pure light blue energy was poured into the pill-like object as it was still forming.

When the last drop of blue energy entered into the pill, the bumpy-looking pill-like object was restored into a smooth and slippery shape. A dull blue gleam could be seen hovering on the surface of the pill, making it look both splendid and magnificent.

Though finished with all the steps, Yao Lao did not stop there. Instead he warmed the pill in the flame for almost ten minutes before finally extinguishing the white flame within his palm.

When the flame died away, Yao Lao's left hand swiftly sucked a jade bottle from the table towards him and fluidly stored the pill, colored in shades of dark green and light blue, into the bottle.

"Phew....." A long sigh escaped his lips as Yao Lao threw the jade bottle to Xiao Yan. He then proceeded to smugly say: "Take a look."

Carefully accepting the jade bottle, Xiao Yan excitedly brought it under his nose to take a whiff. A familiar fragrance entered his nostrils which made him feel renewed with energy.

While eyeing the bluish green pill within the bottle, Xiao Yan's outstanding soul perception let him vaguely know that this Qi Gathering Powder was better than the one previously brought by Nalan Yanran in both quality and effectiveness!

At the thought of Nalan Yanran's look and tone as she held the pill, Xiao Yan let out a mocking smile.

Shaking his head, Xiao Yan tightly gripped the warm jade bottle, heavily heaving out a breath. It had been four years, now he could finally once again step into that level.....

Chapter 65: Dou Zhe Advancement

Though Xiao Yan had obtained the Qi Gathering Pill, he did not immediately consume it. Rather, he let out a deep sigh as he forcefully suppressed his impatience and made himself get into bed to rest.

Xiao Yan knew that if he started the process to become a Dou Zhe in his current state, the chances of failure were over 70%. Although Yao Lao could easily create another Qi Gathering Pill, Xiao Yan did not want to take an unnecessary risk that could be easily avoided.

Seeing that Xiao Yan was able to resist the enticement of immediately breaking through the Dou Zhe level, Yao Lao nodded his head with a sense of satisfaction. With that gratified look on his face, his body dazzled as he transformed into ray of light and disappeared into the ring.

.....

After the completion of the Qi Gathering Pill, Xiao Yan's training pace gradually slowed into a stable rhythm. Everyday, he did an hour of Dou Qi training before going to the mountains at the back of the Xiao Clan to practice his Dou Skills. If he had time, Xiao Yan would accompany Xun Er to stroll about Wu Tang City. All in all, an extremely satisfying leisurely life.

When five days of this easy going life had passed, Xiao Yan finally felt that he was at the peak condition. It was now the best time to try to become a Dou Zhe.

.....

In the mountains behind the Xiao Clan estate, there existed a hidden cave under a cliff. This cave was about a meter wide and had been specially chosen by Xiao Yan as his training ground. On the other side of the cliff were misty clouds while further down under the mist was the Devil Beast Mountain Range, filled with many fierce beasts. Below the cliff was a precipice so deep you could not see into its depths. The only entrance to the cave was a narrow trail which had already been concealed by Xiao Yan using branches and stones. Thus Xiao Yan was very sure that

if he chose this place to make a breakthrough, he would not be interrupted by anyone.

Slowly breathing in, Xiao Yan brought out the jade bottle. Tilting the bottle, a blueish green pill rolled out.

Gazing upon the glossy and smooth Qi Gathering Pill, a small smile formed on Xiao Yan's face. He once again inhaled the fragrance that would ease one's heart. Licking his lips, Xiao Yan unhesitantly popped the pill into his mouth.

As the Qi Gathering Pill entered his mouth, an ice-cold sensation could be felt transmitting from his mouth. A split second later, a luke warm pure energy essence started transferring from his mouth into his body, eliciting a violent jerk of Xiao Yan's body.

With a serene face, Xiao Yan used both hands to quickly form the hand seal of absorbing Dou Qi. His breathing steadily eased as the Dou Qi within his body responded to his thoughts and started to rapidly tangle with the strong and pure essence from the pill to rapidly refine it.

Within the small cave, the originally tranquil air suddenly heaved as lines of white Dou Zi Qi gathered from the air and surged continuously into Xiao Yan's body.

Biting his lip in pain, the two energies collided within his body and caused waves of pain to emanate from the channels all over his body. Thankfully, Xiao Yan's channels were much tougher than an ordinary person's and thus even though it was painful, it would not cause too much damage to him.

In his body, the Dou Qi surrounded the pure green energy essence, rapidly refining it. Green energy was continuously being changed into white Dou Qi and with the newly formed Dou Qi to propel the process, the Dou Qi within Xiao Yan's body rapidly expanded to the point where it could be seen growing with the naked eye.

Even though the pure essence from the pill was being refined unceasingly, the essence kept flowing endlessly. Everytime the Dou Qi managed to refine a batch of essence, a new and bigger batch of green

energy would gush forward.

With both Dou Qi being refined within his body and absorbed from outside, the Dou Qi within Xiao Yan's body gradually filled a large portion of his body's channels.

As before, the refining process continued. When the pill essence finally started to diminish, Xiao Yan who was drunk on the rapid growth of his power suddenly realised that the Dou Qi in his body had swelled to a critical point and could no longer be increased.

The increasing Dou Qi caused Xiao Yan's channels to twitch as the corners of Xiao Yan's mouth split open in response to the waves of intense pain.

"Quick! Condense the Dou Qi cyclone! Before it explodes!" Yao Lao shout was like a clap of thunder, exploding out in Xiao Yan's heart.

Taking in a deep breath of cool air, Xiao Yan's hand seals suddenly changed in a flash of understanding. Touching his thumbs and middle fingers at the same spot, the ten fingers in his hand formed a weird hand seal.

Xiao Yan had taken this step years before and therefore when he used it once again, it flowed like water, smooth and undeterred.

Following the change in hand seal, the surging Dou Qi within Xiao Yan's body suddenly flooded downwards under a wild and ferocious sucking force from the abdomen.

When all of the Dou Qi had gathered into the abdomen area, the white Dou Qi started turning to a milky white color.

"Quickly compress the Dou Qi! Use your soul perception to compress it, if the Dou Qi fails to be condensed into a cyclone, you will once again drop to the 8 Duan Qi!" Yao Lao's shout resounded once again in Xiao Yan's heart.

Slightly nodding his head, Xiao Yan concentrated his mind to the task. In an instant, his outstanding soul perception acquired control over the Dou Qi. The rapid compression started.....

The milky white Dou Zi Qi resisted the guidance of the soul perception, violently churning about.

Though the resistance was in no way weak, Xiao Yan's soul perception had shocked even Yao Lao. Thus the Dou Qi resistance was akin to a praying mantis trying to block a car, only slightly resisting before grudgingly pulling back.

When the Dou Qi was compressed to the size of a palm, it froze and stopped moving.

"Compress again!" Yao Lao shouted.

Gritting his teeth, Xiao Yan screwed his eyes shut. The spiritual perception surrounding the white Dou Qi abruptly peaked in power before ruthlessly pressing down!

"Bang!"

A light muffled noise quietly sounded within Xiao Yan's body.....

Following this, the resistance from the Dou Qi finally dissipated, leaving behind a drained Xiao Yan.

A heavy sigh escaped as Xiao Yan fell powerless to the ground, his chest rose and fell rapidly due to exhaustion.

As he laid on the cold floor of the cave, Xiao Yan yet again experienced abundant energy that he had not felt for four years. A smile floated upon his lips, growing wider and wider until at last it became a chuckle, a hearty laughter, a howling laughter.....

Chapter 66: Flame Mantra

After lying on the icy, cold, rock floor for a long time, Xiao Yan finally managed to catch his breath. The genuine happiness plastered across his face was hard to conceal as he tested out his numb legs before once again entering a training posture.

Xiao Yan breathed out gently and slowly closing his eyes he let his thoughts gradually delve into the mysteries of his body.

Inner View: a support technique unique to those of Dou Zhe level and above. The greater one's strength, the deeper one would be able to explore and penetrate the deeper mysteries of one's body.

His thoughts ventured into his abdominal area, where a milky white palm-sized Vortex slowly stirred. Cream-white energy swirled around the Vortex in a nebulous mist.

Observing the tiny Vortex with his thoughts, Xiao Yan nodded his head – he was satisfied. Although the Vortex was tiny, the energy contained within it was more than ten times more potent than what he had when he was 9 Duan Qi!

Dou Zhe and 9 Duan Qi had different natures. The energy assimilated before becoming a Dou Zhe was actually called Dou Zi Qi, after becoming a Dou Zhe, the assimilated energy was now known as true Dou Qi!

Though there was but a one word difference between their names, the true difference was more like comparing heaven to earth: completely incomparable.

Xiao Yan consciously directed his thoughts to take control of the Vortex. Under its control, a thread of milky white Dou Qi was swiftly extracted from the Vortex and allowed to swirl around.

Continuously controlling the Vortex, making it spew forth and absorb back the Dou Qi with his thoughts, Xiao Yan's mastery slowly increased. Only when he was satisfied did Xiao Yan finally stop this game-like training and withdraw his thoughts out of his body.

His tightly shut eyes suddenly opened, revealing a milky white light that lingered for about ten seconds before fading away within his black pupils.

Xiao Yan then opened his mouth to spit out a mouthful of murky and impure air, after which his complexion brightened noticeably.

Rolling his head from side to side to stretch his neck, cracking sounds could be heard which drew out a grin from Xiao Yan. As he lifted his head to gaze at the ghostly figure of Yao Lao who was floating just outside the cave, Xiao Yan smiled brightly and said: "Success."

"Hmpf, it is your good fortune to have successfully condensed a Qi Vortex on your first try." Yao Lao replied in an indifferent tone as he nodded his head.

"More like I depended on my own abilities?" Xiao Yan retorted as he loosened his shoulders. Suddenly, he remembered something as a fawning look appeared on his face. Stretching out a hand, he asked somewhat bashfully: "Teacher, I have already reached the Dou Zhe level, isn't it time to give me a Qi Technique?"

Yao Lao rolled his eyes. His body floated into the cave and he slowly sat before Xiao Yan. He thought for a while before he asked with a solemn expression: "What Qi Technique do you want?"

"Well, the.....the thing that's more strange than a Heaven Tier Qi Technique, the one that can.. that can evolve." Xiao Yan scratched his head and asked in a somewhat embarrassed tone.

Hearing Xiao Yan, a look of conflict flashed across Yao Lao's face and unexpectedly, he remained silent.

"Master, what's wrong? Did you lie about that Qi Technique?" Seeing the look on Yao Lao's face, Xiao Yan couldn't help but nervously ask.

"The Qi Technique that I told you about, can indeed evolve, I didn't fool you." Yao Lao whispered.

Hearing Yao Lao confirm his question, a sense of happiness rushed to Xiao Yan's face. Twisting his hands, he carefully asked: "Then can you let me use it?"

“This strange Qi Technique can indeed evolve but the risk is very high.” Yao Lao exclaimed after being silent for a long time.

Seeing the look on Yao Lao’s face, Xiao Yan slowly pulled his hand back and asked, “How high?”

Yao Lao smiled bitterly, “In my life, I have never seen anyone train this Qi Technique or heard about anyone that uses this Qi Technique. So, I don’t know how high the risk is, however, with my experience and upon seeing the difficulty of this Technique, I would say that the maximum success rate would not be more than 20%....”

“20%?” Xiao Yan’s face stiffened, “It’s that low?”

Yao Lao sighed and nodded, “I’m afraid that it is that low.”

Smiling bitterly and massaging his forehead, Xiao Yan was still reluctant to give up on the chance to learn an evolving Qi Technique. The temptation for a Qi Technique that could evolve into a Heaven Tier Qi Technique was simply too big.

“Teacher, can you give me an overview of this Qi Technique?”

Yao Lao rubbed his palms together and whispered after a while, “This Qi Technique’s requirements to “evolve” is related to the Heavenly Flames that I’ve told you before.”

Xiao Yan’s eyes narrowed and he kept silent while listening carefully.

“Okay, I obtained this Dou Qi technique through an accident. This Qi Technique originally was nameless. However, I gave it a name called “Flame Mantra”. Speaking up to here, Yao Lao tried to hide the mixed expression on his face. It seemed the process to obtain this Dou Qi technique was not as easy as he had told previously.

“Flame Mantra can indeed evolve, but one of its preconditions is that it needs a “Heavenly Flame” as raw material. With each evolution, it needs to swallow one type of “Heavenly Flame”!” Yao Lao’s voice became somewhat rough: “You need to know that “Heavenly Flames” are some of the most violent forms of energy in this world. Even if you find it, no one can guarantee that you will be able to swallow it. In the past when I

discovered this “Bone Chilling Flame”, I was almost burned alive to nothingness by it...

“The scariest part of this Method is the need to assimilate the various “Heavenly Flames” any one of the Heavenly Flames could place a Dou Huang on the precipice between life and death, I dare not imagine what would happen to a person who had two types of Heavenly Flames in their body.....”

Gazing at the unfathomable look that Yao Lao had, Xiao Yan was also frightened stiff, swallowing Heavenly Flames to evolve? God dammit, you can’t even be sure of whether you will be able to consume the flame or if the flame will consume you! The creator of this Qi Method must have been one crazy person.

“Although this Technique is dangerous beyond your wildest dreams, I do not doubt its potential. If it is truly mastered..... in the Dou Qi Continent, with the exception of a few irregulars..... no one else would be your match.” Yao Lao sighed.

Xiao Yan nodded, slightly awed at its potential. If someone were able to control a few types of Heavenly Flames, even a Dou Sheng would not dare take that person lightly. Of course that is only if that someone does not first get consumed by the Heavenly Flames.....

Eyeing Xiao Yan, Yao Lao hesitated for a while before asking: “Now, do you..... still want to learn it?”

Xiao Yan slightly shivered in silence.

Chapter 67: Choice

Regarding the “Flame Mantra”, Xiao Yan truly did not want to abandon it. After all, to be able to evolve to a Tian Dou Qi technique, the ability was really enticing. On this enormous Dou Qi continent, a Tian Rank Dou Qi Technique would be equal to a ticket to become the strongest.

Although the Qi method was powerful, the success rate was not even 20%. This fact would discourage most people. With his 10 fingers intersecting tightly together, Xiao Yan’s face changed continuously, bouncing between hesitation and distress.

Watching the apprehension on Xiao Yan’s face calmly, Yao Lao’s old face also showed a mixed expression. After a while he sighed softly: “This matter can only be decided by yourself. I also do not want to meddle too much. However, I want to ask you one thing.....What are your feelings toward the girl Xun Er?”

“Eh?” To be asked about this issue by Yao Lao startled him. Xiao Yan’s face blushed somewhat. Opening his mouth after a while and with a forced smile, he said: “Teacher, why do you suddenly ask about this? Xun Er is my younger sister. Towards her.....what feeling could I have?” At those last words, Xiao Yan seemed to feel somewhat weak.

“Hehe, sister? You also know that you do not have the slightest blood relation to her. This beautiful girl is only about 15 or 16 years old, yet the Xiao clan’s young generation already admires her endlessly. When she is grown up, what is there to say anymore?” Speaking up to here, Yao Lao shot a glance to Xiao Yan. Smiling dimly he said: “If you think about the possibility that one day another man might marry her. How would you feel?”

Forcing a faint smile on his face, Xiao Yan pursed his brows slowly. He let out a light breath and whispered: “Seems.....a little hard to accept.”

“Hehe, since you can feel that it is somewhat hard to accept then in your heart you don’t simply think of her as only your younger sister.....” Yao Lao was smiling yet not smiling as he spoke.

His face red once more, Xiao Yan was speechless and he mumbled somewhat. Spreading out his arms helplessly with a forced smile, he said: "Teacher, what do you actually want to say?"

"All of that was to clear your mind about what feeling you have towards her.....Since you and her already have unclear thoughts, you should judge your own strength and your development potential." Congealing his face, Yao Lao gulped and somewhat doubtfully spoke: "The girl's background is a little frightful. I do not know the exact truth about her background. Somehow, the small Xiao Clan has some kind of a relationship of with them. However, only this cannot fill the wide gap between you. The gap of status between you two is really too immense. Even if the girl likes you, those people behind her can not agree to it in any way!"

Closing his eyes, Xiao Yan intersected his palms together and held them tightly.

"This continent is a world where strength is respected. To have strength is also to have dignity. Previously you saw the behavior of Nalan Yanran. The reason as to how she is capable of acting so haughty and how she was able to look down on you is because of her background: her strength is greater than yours!" Looking at Xiao Yan's appearance, Yao Lao sighed with sincere and earnest words.

"The power behind Xun Er is more frightening than the Faction of the Misty Cloud. Therefore, in their eyes, you are only but a worm. Even though you have outstanding talent, they are unlikely to see you as anything important. Truly, through the years, they have already seen many extremely gifted talents.....only if you are able to make them fear your strength , will you have fulfilled your wish."

Xiao Yan touched his nose and with a shrug, he asked softly: "Will practicing 'Flame Mantra' give me that kind of power?"

"Actually, only by successfully practicing 'Flame Mantra' will you have that chance!" Yao Lao shook his head and he stared again.

Sighing lightly, Xiao Yan braced his chin. The smile of that elegant girl in the former days appeared ineffably before his eyes slowly. The silver

bell-like laughter hovered in his ear.

Taking a long breath Xiao Yan smiled bitterly and said: "Teacher has said this much and still calls it not meddling with my decision?"

"Hehe....." Yao Lao stroked his withered and aged face as he let out an awkward laugh. Slightly embarrassed, he replied: "Okay, I admit I may have had some intentions of goading you, but from my point of view, I really hoped that you would practice this 'Flame Mantra'."

"You should know that I am currently just a mere spirit right?" Yao Lao spread out his arms as he asked.

Xiao Yan nodded.

"Other people may have died, but since my soul perception is much stronger than others, I have somehow strangely survived in this form....." Yao Lao smiled bitterly as if he was mocking himself.

"I do not like to live this way, each day feels like a fake and empty illusion to me. I still have things that I must personally accomplish, therefore, I need to leave this spirit state."

"Teacher wants to revive?" Xiao Yan blinked in slight disbelief. Stunned, he continued: "In this world, there should be nothing that would be able to revive the dead right?"

"Under normal circumstances, it is so." Nodding in agreement, a passionate expression appeared on Yao Lao as he continued: "Yet according to some obscure descriptions of the 'Flame Mantra', if successfully mastered, one would be able to blend a few types of Heavenly Flames together to forge a body that could house a spirit. Obtaining such a body, would be a sort of rebirth for me....."

"In the ring, I have endured countless years in a world without daylight all in hopes of one day meeting a person who has a strong enough soul perception that is able to meet my requirements. I am very lucky to have finally met you." A deep sorrow was etched into the lines of that wrinkled and aged face, though it could only be perceived by a very observant person.

Yao Lao gazed into Xiao Yan's pitch black pair of eyes that stared back at him, smiling bitterly, he continued: "Heh, just take these words as the idle rumblings of an old man. Alas, though I've said that I would not interfere, in the end, I could not help but speak, I am truly....."

Sadly shaking his head, Yao Lao stretched forth his gnarled hands. With a small wave, one black and one red scroll faintly glimmered as they appeared in each hand.

"The red scroll is a fire attributed Low Di Qi Method while the black scroll is the 'Flame Mantra'....." Yao Lao smiled as he raised both hands. His withered face softened slightly as he gently said: "Make your own choice and think about the factors that drive you, as long as you remember that whatever your choice, you will always be my disciple and I will never blame you for it."

Xiao Yan's palm supported his chin as he stared blankly at the two glittering scroll in front of him. A long time later, he licked his lips and raised his shoulders lazily while smiling: "Although I am afraid of death, without power there is no honor. I refuse to go through the kind of humiliation that Nalan Yanran gave me that day ever again. And still, even if it does not go well, I can always change to another Qi Method."

Shaking his head, a brilliant smile lit up Xiao Yan's already delicate face. In Yao Lao's slightly red and moist eyes, the figure of Xiao Yan could be seen stretching out his hand to firmly grab the black scroll.

When his hand touched the scroll, it transformed into a stream of information which poured directly into Xiao Yan's head.

Chapter 68: Fallen Heart Flame

In the narrow cave, Yao Lao watched with closed eyes as Xiao Yan trained his Dou Qi. Rubbing his reddish eyes with his hands, Yao Lao knew that he was one of the reasons why Xiao Yan had chosen this dangerous technique. Emotions welled up within his old heart as he turned to face the sky. With a low sigh, he murmured: "Rest assured, I will definitely nurture you into the most outstanding Alchemist....."

After making the breakthrough to become a Dou Zhe, one would possess the qualifications to practice a Qi Method. After practicing a Technique, the attributeless milky white Dou Qi within the body would change into the same attribute as the practiced Technique.

One did not need too much time for the first Dou Qi change, thus barely two hours later, Xiao Yan slowly opened his eyes from his cross legged sitting position.

Having practiced the Dou Qi Technique, Xiao Yan looked full of vitality and vigor compared to before. In high spirits, his delicate face shone even more with the glossiness of a beautiful piece of jade.

Xiao Yan blinked a few times as his eyes adjusted to the lighting in the cave which had become much brighter than before. Lightly smiling, he knew that this increase in sensitivity was due to the practice of the Qi Method.

"Have you succeeded?" Yao Lao asked with a smile on his face.

"Yeah." Xiao Yan nodded as he held out a fair palm. The Qi Vortex within his body swirled, as a stream of pale yellow Dou Qi left the vortex before finally stopping at an acupuncture point on his palm.

Materializing Dou Qi could only be achieved by those who had attained at least the Da Dou Shi level. The current Xiao Yan obviously did not possess that level of strength, thus the Dou Qi in his body was unable to emerge from the acupuncture point on his palm. The Dou Qi stayed stuck causing Xiao Yan's fair palm to be gradually suffused in a light yellow glow, like an almost burnt out candle, barely able to scatter away the

darkness.

Light yellow was the color of a fire attributed Low Huang Qi Method. The higher the rank of the Qi Method, the deeper the color.

As his eyes gazed upon the meager yellow light on his palm, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head. Lifting his head, he forced a smile as he said: "Before this "Flame Mantra" evolves, my Dou Qi would be of a lower rank than almost everyone else. No need to consider those of a higher level, I can't even be sure of winning over someone of the same level who had practiced a Xuan Level Method..."

"Though the "Flame Mantra" is only at the Low Huang now, its might would not lose to that of a Middle Huang. Moreover, although the Qi Method is weak, don't you still have your Dou Techniques? Three Xuan Level Dou Techniques are enough to make up for the gap in your Method." Yao Lao smiled as he consoled Xiao Yan. Shortly after he added a warning: "Since your Qi Method is inferior to others, it also means that your endurance levels cannot compare to theirs. Therefore, in future battles, you need to be more efficient, no more wasted movements and every move must contain your full force behind it! Make sure to end each fight quickly!"

Xiao Yan nodded in understanding, however his face puckered as if still somewhat depressed.

Seeing this look on Xiao Yan and knowing his personality, Yao Lao helplessly shook his head. With no other alternative, he could only pay the price and say: "When you have thoroughly mastered the three Dou Techniques you now possess, I will once again give you a new Dou Technique. You'll be biting off more than you can chew right now, you should understand this principle right?"

"What rank?" Xiao Yan's eyes lit up as he very carefully inquired.

Angry yet happy at Xiao Yan's cautious appearance, Yao Lao stroked his beard and coldly snorted: "All I'll say is that it won't be lower than the level of "Octane Blast"."

At these words, Xiao Yan face immediately lit up like the sun. Octane

Blast was a High Xuan Dou Technique, what could be higher than that?

Di Level!

Though Di Level was only one grade better than High Xuan Level, the distance between the two was as wide as the grand canyon. With enough wealth and a bit of luck, one could occasionally obtain a High Xuan Dou Technique from a high-ranking auction. Yet a Di Level Dou Technique could be said to be priced beyond the market as it was once heard that in the imperial capital of Jia Ma Empire, the price of a Di Level Dou Technique had rocketed to a sky-high price of about ten million, which was equivalent to an entire year of taxes from the entire Jia Ma Empire.

Although it was merely one grade of difference, the price between the two was more than a hundred times. From this it could be seen that Xuan Level and Di Level were two completely different concepts.

Thinking about this almost legendary level, Xiao Yan's feelings boiled over, wishing he could compel Yao Lao to teach it to him straightaway. However, after considering the status and relationship between the two of them, he decided to obediently give up on that comical idea.

"Teacher, when will you teach me Alchemy?" Temporarily letting go of the thoughts of the Di Level Dou Technique , Xiao Yan asked yet again.

"Alchemy is not meant to be learnt in this small and tiny clan." Yao Lao answered as he shook his head. Smiling, he continued: "In addition, almost half the time has passed since you made the three year bet between yourself and Nalan Yanran. It is foolish to stay in Wu Tan City any more, the training speed here is too slow. Furthermore, I am unable to utilise some training methods due to complicated and various reasons. Thus I want to bring you on a training trip for slightly over a year."

"More than a year?" Hearing this, Xiao Yan was somewhat hesitant, however when he thought about that haughty woman, he resolutely nodded his head and replied: "Okay, a year, so be it. When do we leave?"

"Let us wait for two months." Yao Lao smiled and said.

"Why wait for so long?" Xiao Yan asked in bewilderment.

“Because one month later is the time for Jia Nan Academy to enroll new students and you need to go register.” Yao Lao lightly smiled as he replied.

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan forced out a smile and questioned: “What do I need to do there? I am not lacking in Qi Methods or Dou Techniques, what else can they teach me?”

“I’m not asking you to learn something there.” Yao Lao gave him ‘the eye’ as his eyebrows creased. Lowering his voice, Yao Lao said: “You need to go to Jia Nan Academy to search for a type of “Heavenly Flame”, I had previously obtained intelligence that in Jia Nan Academy there should be a type of Heavenly Flame called “Fallen Heart Flame”. This Heavenly Flame is ranked 14th on the “Heavenly Flames List”! If you are able to obtain this Heavenly Flame, “Flame Mantra” could possibly evolve.....”

“Fallen Heart Flame?”

Xiao Yan softly whispered this queer name to himself as his eyes gradually lit up.

Chapter 69: The Furious Xun Er

After settling everything, Xiao Yan slowly emerged from the cave. Following the mountain path, he sneakily climbed to the mountain top and glanced about to check that no one else was around. Finally, letting out a sigh of relief, he took large strides as he walked directly towards the clan home.

Leisurely returning to the clan, Xiao Yan chanced upon the three Clan Elders who hurriedly rushed past as they brushed shoulders with him in the front courtyard. Pausing his step, Xiao Yan was somewhat puzzled at the gloomy yet furious faces of the three Elders who had just left.

“Who has offended them now?” Amazed, Xiao Yan shook his head and turned around to find a green clothed young maiden scuttling out from a side path to stand, slender and elegant, before him.

At the sight of the adorable Xun Er who wore a smiling expression on her face, Xiao Yan’s heart skipped a beat. Thinking back on what Yao Lao had asked in the cave, his face grew hot as he somewhat guiltily turned his gaze to the sky to act as if he was in thought.

Slightly dazed by Xiao Yan’s unusual behaviour, it was only a moment later that Xun Er shook her head as she could not make heads or tails of the reason behind this change. Taking a step forward, she fluidly glanced over Xiao Yan as a look of surprise appeared on her delicate face. Both hands on her back, she leaned forward until there was only 1 cm between them, she feigned a smile and said: “Elder Brother Xiao Yan, you’ve advanced to Dou Zhe?”

Overwhelmed by the fragrant, warm breath that blew onto his face, Xiao Yan momentarily lost his wits. Furiously shaking his head to break the spell, he firmly forced down his fluttering heart. Patting the head of the young maiden who was as tall as him, he grudgingly said: “Why can’t you let me say it myself to satisfy my conceited tendencies?”

Hearing this, Xun Er’s eyes slightly curved into the shape of a beautiful crescent moon. Like always, She extended out a fair, delicate hand and

started to earnestly smooth the creases on Xiao Yan's clothes.

In the past, when Xiao Yan was treated this way by Xun Er, he did not think twice about it. Yet today, after the feelings in his heart had been exposed by Yao Lao, he was now suddenly disturbed by this gesture.

Near this path, other clansmen occasionally passed by. At the sight of Xun Er helping Xiao Yan to tidy his clothes like a wife, they could not help but be full of envy.

As he inclined his head to look upon her delicate and flawless face, a strand of fine black hair fell across her forehead. It emphasized the largeness of her eyes which fluidly wandered about, an exceedingly touching sight.

Staring blankly at Xun Er, the pace of Xiao Yan's breathing gradually increased as his gaze heated up with passion.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge.....you, what are you looking at." Xun Er quietly grumbled after she patted down the creases on Xiao Yan's clothes. She had finally become aware of his passionate gaze, her cheeks reddening in response.

"Ah? Oh....." coming to his senses, Xiao Yan's face also turned a shade of pink. Luckily his skin was much thicker than Xun Er's, after faking two coughs, he nonchalantly replied: "Nothing much, it's just that Xun Er has become more and more pretty."

Hearing Xiao Yan's words, Xun Er did not reply and gently snorted. However, her rosy lips lifted to form a pleased expression.

"Oh, right....." Recalling something, Xun Er abruptly cast a glance over Xiao Yan's body again before gently asking: "Since Xiao Yan ge-ge has already advanced to Dou Zhe, then a Qi Method has also be learnt?"

Xiao Yan's expression stiffened as he embarrassedly nodded in affirmation.

Slim fingers pressed against her snow white chin, Xun Er laughed merrily and said: "Would you let Xun Er see what level Qi Method it is?"

“Coughs.....uh Qi Methods...are just objects, that aside.....As long as one works hard, won’t the level not matter?” Xiao Yan replied as he gave out a hollow laugh.

Observing Xiao Yan’s expression, a dangerous glint slowly appeared in Xun Er’s eyes, yet her tone remained gentle as she said: “Xiao Yan ge-ge, just let Xun Er take a look.....”

At the obstinate Xun Er, Xiao Yan could only helplessly shrug his shoulders as he stretched out a hand. A moment later, a weak light yellow glow appeared.

“Xiao Yan ge-ge, this is the better Technique that you talked about?” Staring at the light yellow glow that looked as if it would be extinguished at any moment, Xun Er’s face turned a little unsightly. Her rosy lips pursed, displaying the indignation in her heart.

Xiao Yan awkwardly laughed, unsure of how to explain.

“You clearly know that if you possess a high grade Qi Method in the initial stages, it goes without saying that it would benefit your future training. Yet you rejected me, Xun Er was not trying to give you charity. Worst case scenario, you could have returned the Qi Method when you got a better one. However, now you’re practicing the lowest tier of Qi Methods, is this not to spite me?” Xun Er’s eyes widely opened as she glared at Xiao Yan in anger. Her long eyelashes sparkled with moisture.

Being capable of making the sweet-natured Xun Er use this manner of speech, it is possible to imagine just how much Xun Er was puzzled and furious at Xiao Yan’s actions.

As his eyes fell upon a Xun Er who was biting her lips while stubbornly hoping for an answer from him, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head. He forced a smile and replied in a low voice: “We have lived together for ten years, do you still not understand me? Do you really think that I would be the kind of person that would let go of a high level Qi Method and instead practice the lowest level of Qi Methods like an idiot?”

“But your Method...is undoubtedly of the Low Huang Level, I can feel it.” Xun Er obstinately insisted after hearing Xiao Yan’s reply; though the

anger on her face had already slightly dissipated.

“A book cannot be judged by its cover, currently it is not convenient for me to tell you in detail about the reason but someday in the future, you will understand. The present me is definitely not letting my emotions cloud my judgement.....” Xiao Yan said as he smiled.

“Really?” Gazing at the serious look on Xiao Yan, Xun Er mulled in silence for awhile before hesitantly asking once again.

“Yes, it’s true, of course its true.....” Xiao Yan hastily nodded his head. Fearing that she would continue to ask about the issue, he quickly changed the topic by asking: “Did something happen in the clan recently? How come the elders had such uncomfortable expressions?”

“Yea, recently the Jia Lie Clan managed to invite a first tier Alchemist from god knows where. At present, their marketplace has a new remedy called ‘Return of Spring Powder’. This remedy is cheap yet effective, making it extremely well received and loved by the mercenaries in Wu Tan City.” Xun Er nodded as she furrowed her eyebrows and continued explaining: “Because of the influence from the ‘Return of Spring Powder’, the traffic in the Xiao Clan marketplace has been cut by almost half and because of this loss, the merchants from the marketplace have relocated to the Jia Lie Clan’s Marketplace. Though it had only been a few days, the Xiao Clan has already suffered economically by quite a bit, causing Uncle Xiao to worry about this event.”

Hearing this, Xiao Yan nodded his head in understanding, no wonder the three Elders had such gloomy expressions.

Xiao Yan slightly narrowed his eyes as he rubbed his nose, sneering in his heart: “Just a mere first tier Alchemist, does Jia Lie Clan really think he’s something?”

Chapter 70: Investigation

Xiao Yan found an excuse to part with Xun Er before stealthily slipping out of the clan. Pausing quickly to think, he decided to go to the nearest small marketplace owned by the Jia Lie Clan.

Although he was not interested in helping the Elders to ease their troubles, he hoped within his capabilities, he could be of some help to his father. To help, he would need to know where to start, thus, Xiao Yan needed to first investigate the Jia Lie Clan's marketplaces.

This small marketplace owned by the Jia Lie Clan was positioned in a somewhat remote area and thus usually enjoyed a small crowd. However, when Xiao Yan walked into the marketplace, he was overwhelmed by the jam-packed streets and the deafening clamor of the crowds.

On the wide street, people rushed about. Some bare-armed and burly men were shouting while desperately pushing their way through the crowd. From the faint smell of blood emitting from these men, they were probably bloodthirsty mercenaries. Due to being in frequent contact with death, they held a great love for healing ointments, after all, when penetrating deeply into dangerous lands, a little healing ointment might be just the right price to buy back a comrade's life.

Standing at the entrance of the marketplace, Xiao Yan saw a few mercenaries carrying small wooden cases while pushing their way out of the crowd before joyously darting out of the market.

"Those cases should contain 'Return of Spring Powder' right?" Quietly whispering this line, Xiao Yan also entered the street and used all of his might to burrow into the crowd. At a stall selling 'Return of Spring Powder', he spent a hundred gold to buy a case.

Holding the case as he once again painstakingly squeezed out of the crowd, Xiao Yan finally let out a breath of relief. Thinking back at the proud and impatient faces of the medicine sellers, he could not help but sneer bitterly in his heart: those dogs who use their position to bully others.

As he walked out of the market with the case, Xiao Yan lifted the case lid. Within it were ten small bottles made of a crude material, probably the lowest grade of jade stone. It would be impossible to maintain the effectiveness of the medicine with this kind of material.

Opening the bottle, a mildly green fluid which emitted an extremely weak medicine smell was found to be contained within.

"Teacher, can this even be called medicine?" Somewhat amazed at the diluted medicine, Xiao Yan could not bear but ask in his heart.

"Yea, it can count as the lowest grade of healing medicine with some healing effects. This kind of simple healing medicine is not hard to make and because of its commonness, it can only be sold at a cheap price. This is why only a few first tier alchemists bother to manufacture it."

"It is indeed very cheap, one hundred gold for ten bottles is ten gold per bottle. To an Alchemist, this is really shameful." Slightly nodding his head, Xiao Yan hesitated for a moment before asking: "Teacher, do you have any remedies that are somewhat better than this?"

"A lot, but those potions are too low level so I seldom manufacture them." Yao Lao paused before speaking again: "Do you want to manufacture them for the Xiao Clan? That's good since you are already a Dou Zhe, it is time to try your hand at refining some medicine."

"Oh? I get to refine?" Xiao Yan was slightly astonished at Yao Lao's words.

"Could it be that you still expect me to personally handle this kind of thing?" Yao Lao unhappily retorted before proceeding with his instructions: "First, go to the Auction House to find a somewhat better quality medicine cauldron. Afterwards, you need to purchase a big batch of basic medicine ingredients. At the early stages, a new alchemist depends on mass producing pill to gain experience."

Xiao Yan licked his lips with an eager expression on his face. Throwing the case into a ditch by the roadside, he ran quickly towards the location of the Primer Auction house.

Right before he arrived at the Auction House, Xiao Yan once again donned the black mantle in a hidden corner before taking his time to slowly approach the Auction House.

All of the staff at Primer Auction House were already familiar with Xiao Yan's disguise, thus when they saw a figure wearing a black mantle slowly advancing from afar, one of them quickly entered into the Auction House to inform Ya Fei and Gu Ni.

Hearing their subordinates' announcement, Ya Fei and Gu Ni simultaneously abandoned their current work to appear at the Auction House door and were all smiles as they led Xiao Yan into the guest room.

"I have made this visit to ask for your help in obtaining a quality cauldron." The old voice sounded from under the black gown. Then, with both hands, he brought the cup of tea towards his mouth to take a sip.

Aware of the other party's status, Ya Fei was not at all surprised at his request. Smiling while nodding her head, she beckoned to call a serving girl. Ya Fei softly gave the girl a few instructions before waving her hand to send the girl off.

"Haha, sir, you have come at such an opportune moment, just this morning the auction house received a medicine cauldron refined by fiery flames. This cauldron was forged by the famous blacksmith from the Jia Ma Empire, Master He Er. Not only does it amplify the Dou Qi Flame, it is also made of some rare metals that help to increase the chances of successfully refining medicine. These days, these kinds of medicine cauldrons are highly praised by the Alchemists of Jia Ma Empire." Ya Fei explained as she smiled, her eyes moved about bewitchingly.

"Mmm." The old voice carried a slightly pleased tone. Slightly hesitating before asking again: "Also prepare for me a low level "Storage Ring" with 500 stalks of Blood Clot Grass, 600 Bone Growing Flower, 500 Poppy Flowers, 500 Lively Fruits....."

Hearing these requests, Gu Ni's eyelids jumped up slightly. Even the lowest grade "Storage Ring" costs about 70 to 80 thousand and though the latter medicine ingredients were not that rare, the large quantity required

meant that it would take no less than 100,000 gold to prepare. Lastly, if the medical cauldron mentioned by Ya Fei was auctioned, it could fetch a price of about 150,000. All these things added up, without 300,000 gold it would be difficult to manage.

Ya Fei was likewise stunned by the request. The auction house was not owned by her alone and thus she had to report most of the profits and transactions to the headquarters. Privately using 300,000 worth of funds was not impossible but it would definitely be found out by her superiors.

Lightly biting her red lips and taking a bit of time to weigh the benefits a fourth tier alchemist could bring, Ya Fei gave an easy smile as she said: "Old sir, everything will be prepared in an hour."

"Haha, good....." For the first time in front of Ya Fai, Yao Lao normally unenthusiastic tone was replaced by a pleased laughter.

A fair hand emerged from beneath the black gown to fish out a blue jade card and place it on the table. Yao Lao smiled and said: "I am not sure if this money is enough for the purchases..... but you can add in another set of Qi Gathering Pill materials."

Hearing what was said, Gu Ni complexion changed faintly. Another set of materials for a Qi Gathering Pill? Wouldn't that be another 50,000 gold?

Rosy lips slightly parted, Ya Fei was a little angry too. Although the other party was a fourth tier Alchemist, this was too much.

Though she was angry, Ya Fei kept these feelings in her heart, not letting even the slightest bit show on her lovely face by donning a fully smiling expression. Thinking to herself for a moment, she laughed bitterly in her heart. Reminding herself that sometimes sacrifices had to be made for the greater good, she had no choice but to sigh and nod, indicating her agreement.

"Haha, looks like the two of you have misunderstood. This set of materials is not for myself, I was only thinking of helping out by making a "Qi Gathering Pill" for you. Letting you two pay for the cost of the materials shouldn't be too much right?" The old voice coolly laughed.

A slightly dazed but still lovely face was soon after suddenly filled with joy, Ya Fei's wits were temporarily scattered by this abrupt yet pleasant surprise. A short period of time later, Ya Fei finally managed to suppress her flushed face and calm down. Making eye contact with the similarly joyous Gu Ni, she somewhat nervously replied in a soft voice: "Then I'll have to thank you sir."

Chapter 71: Circumstances of the Xiao Clan

After sitting for nearly an hour, a pretty maid finally walked in. Her two hands carried a silver tray, and in the center of the tray was a faint red ring.

Taking the silver tray and sending back the maid, Ya Fei personally handed over the goods to Xiao Yan and smilingly said: "Old Sir, the cauldron as well as all the alchemic ingredients you need are all in the 'Storage Ring'".

Extending a hand to pick up the storage ring, Xiao Yan let it roll about in his palm then faintly nodded. Yao Lao's voice also sounded out at just the right time: "Okay. After refining the Qi Gathering Pill, I will bring it to you."

Ya Fei's pretty eyes were filled with delight as shei hastily nodded.

"Alright, there's no need for you to send me out. I'll go out by myself."

Waving his hand, Xiao Yan took the ring and slid it onto his finger. Then, without even turning back, he headed towards the back of the parlor and went out. On the table, the blue jade card was still there as he did not want to owe the people too much. Thus, he had just left it there.

Staring at the receding figure leaving through the door, Ya Fei nibbled her red lips, then stepped forward to take the blue jade card into her hand. Musing a bit, she asked in a clear voice: "Uncle Gu Ni, to refine a Qi Gathering Pill, the success rate is not that high right?"

"Yes. It's said that even Pill King Wang Gu He's success rate for refining Qi Gathering Pills is only around 7 out of 10. For normal fourth tier alchemists, the success rate is only around 5 out of 10," Gu Ni said in a low voice.

"But this old sir, he succeeds in refining on the first try....." Ya Fei said as she knitted her thin black brows.

“Who knows, maybe his luck is good.....” Gu Ni shook his head and didn’t care too much about the matter. After all, for alchemists, luck was a big factor in successfully refining pills. If one’s luck was good, even when continuously refining several times, one would not fail.

“Could it be..... that he’s not just a fourth tier alchemist?” Ya Fei asked with hesitation after pondering a bit.

“Haha, how is that possible. The number of fifth tier alchemists in Jia Ma Empire can be counted on one’s hands. At that sort of status, even if it was the empire or great forces like the Misty Cloud Faction, they would all view this person as a VIP. Why would such a person come to our own auction house to auction pills.” Gu Ni laughed.

At this, Ya Fei also slightly nodded her head and let out a sigh, bitterly laughing: “It seems that I don’t have enough experience. I’m afraid that my previous hesitation negatively impacted this mysterious alchemist’s favorable impression of us by a large amount.”

“You can’t blame yourself for this. That kind of huge transaction, even I wouldn’t dare to answer easily. That you are capable to this extent is already very good. In regards to our relations with that alchemist, in the future, just take your time and get along amiably. As long as he does not develop any sort of ill will towards us then it’s fine.” Gu Ni said comfortingly.

Forcing a smile to her face as she nodded, Ya Fei sat lethargically on the chair, revealing her figure. As her lovely eyes blinked, having some doubts, she softly asked: “What does he intend to do with so many low grade medicine ingredients?”

“Those medicine ingredients have the effect of stopping bleeding and strengthening bones. I think he should be planning to manufacture healing medicine.” Gu Ni muttered as his eyebrows pursed together. Similarly puzzled he said: “But with his status, why would he manufacture these cheaply-priced healing medicine?”

Hearing this, Ya Fei’s beautiful eyes slightly narrowed, her long fingernails lightly tapped on the table. A moment later, realization dawned

upon her, she softly said: "Looks like this old sir seems to be very caring towards the Xiao Clan....."

Eyebrows wrinkled tightly together, Gu Ni's expression suddenly changed into one of amazement: "Are you saying that he wants to give the Xiao Clan healing medicine?"

"Recently I've heard that the Jia Lie Clan had invited over a first tier Alchemist. The cheap "Return of Spring Powder" has already snatched away half of the city's crowds, if the Xiao Clan does not act soon, I'm afraid that their marketplaces will end up embarrassingly empty." Ya Fei eyes darted around as she voiced out her conclusion, smugly smiling she continued to explain: "Previously, the old sir had already said that if there was a chance, he would co operate with the Xiao Clan and buying so many healing ingredients at this time could only mean one thing: he meant what he said."

"Heh, looks like the Xiao Clan has really lucked out this time, while the Jia Lie Clan is going to be in trouble." Having listened to Ya Fei's analysis, Gu Ni grinned. An envious look was on his face since obtaining the help of a fourth tier Alchemist was not something just any clan could receive.

Slightly inclining her head, Ya Fei gave an easy smile as she said: "We should also make some contact with the Xiao Clan soon, though adding a flower to a bracelet will make one somewhat happy, providing help when one needs it the most is a much better way of strengthening both parties ties."

Gu Ni approvingly nodded his head, with a fourth tier Alchemist behind them, ties with the Xiao Clan were now important.

.....

Exiting the auction house, as usual, Xiao Yan prudently turned round and round the streets for at least half a day before finally taking off his disguise in a desolate alley.

Tossing and catching the light red "Storage Ring" in his hand, Xiao Yan was somewhat happy. This kind of Storage Ring was made by a type of uncommon material called "Storage Stone". The characteristic of this

material was that there was a unique small space within it where any lifeless objects could be stored. Though this was extremely convenient, due to the sparsity of the “Storage Stone”, its was extremely precious. The lowest grade “Storage Ring” in Xiao Yan’s hands only had a space of about three to four square metres, yet it costs almost 100,000 gold. In the Xiao Clan, Xiao Yan had only seen his father and the first Elder own Storage Rings.

Xiao Yan fiddled with the Storage Ring for a while, hesitatingly examining it. In the end he did not wear it but rather carefully stored it in his bosom. This kind of ring was considerably pricey, if it was seen by his father or others, he would have a hard time explaining how he came to obtain it.

Xiao Yan kicked the black mantle into the gutter before carefully walking out of the desolate alley. Afterwards he quickly dashed back to his clan.

As Xiao Yan followed the lane that passed through the clan home, he heard his father’s furious voice from Meeting Room. Eyelids twitching, Xiao Yan moved forward to secretly peer through a crack in the door.

“Dammit, Jia Lie Bi that bastard is too much, he actually dared to brazenly steal our business!” Within the room, Xiao Zhan was currently raging as he pounded on the table. Tea from the teacups spilled all over the table.

“Presently, the marketplaces of the Xiao Clan had already lost a great amount of traffic. The merchants left in the marketplace are also very worried and frightened. A few of them have even secretly left for the Jia Lie Clan’s marketplaces. If this continues, in another half a month I am afraid that..... our marketplace will go bankrupt.” The second Elder said with a gloomy face as he gnashed his teeth together in fury.

“How about..... I bring a few of our clan’s elites and secretly deal with that alchemist?” The third elder’s gaze were ferocious as he suggested this in a dark tone.

“There are at least two Da Dou Shi protecting the Alchemist, it won’t be

so easy.” Xiao Zhan helplessly said as he moved his hands to and fro.

“But if we continue in this manner, our losses will be too great. The profits from the marketplaces of Wu Tan City is a large part of the total revenue of our Xiao Clan.” The Third Elder was somewhat unwilling to back down.

The corners of Xiao Zhan’s mouth twitched. At the moment, he could not think of any good ideas.

“That day at the auction, didn’t that mysterious alchemist say that there might come an opportunity where he would work with us? Seeing how Gu Ni was so respectful towards him, his tier as an alchemist is definitely not low. If he could help us, then that Jia Lie Clan would definitely lose out.” The First Elder, who had been silent up until now, suddenly spoke up in a soft voice.

“Ai, who knows if he just randomly blabbered. For people of that kind of status, what kind of benefits would they get out of cooperating with us? For such little profit, would they even care?” Xiao Zhan laughed bitterly and shook his head as he sat on the chair and sighed.

The three elders were all silent as well. Indeed, it was a bit challenging for the Xiao Clan to establish connections with people of such status.

“F**k. We’ll bear it for a few more days. If the Jia Lie Clan still does not practice restraint then don’t blame us for retaliating no matter the costs!” Licking his lips, Xiao Zhan gripped onto the chair frame as an ominous glint flashed across his eyes.

Outside the door, listening up till here, Xiao Yan faintly shrugged his shoulders as his hand played with the storage ring at his chest. Letting out a cold smirk, he slowly left.

Chapter 72: Learning to Refine Medicine

Xiao Yan left the meeting room and returned to his room to make some final preparations to refine some healing medicine. Once he was done with his preparations, he stealthily snuck back to his desolate cave, the one he previously trained in.

As Yao Lao had said before, it was important to not be disturbed during the medicine refinement process and given the great number of clan members, this would be difficult to accomplish at home. If by chance something, like Xiao Yu bargaining on him, was to happen, Xiao Yan would be unable fully bear with the consequences

Sneakily stepping into the cave, Xiao Yan was itching to get started, so he quickly fished out the Storage Ring from his bosom and pushed a stream of Dou Qi into it. The light red ring emitted a flicker of light before a roughly half meter long red medicine cauldron poofed into existence within the cave.

The entire medicine cauldron was a dark crimson red and it gave off a slight glow. There were two malevolent looking snake heads carved beneath the cauldron, their gaping maws forming two connected cavities for air to enter into the cauldron. As the two cavities wound and extended deep into the cauldron, the diameter grew smaller and smaller. If one were to try to look in, they would barely be able to see anything.

At the apex of the medicine cauldron was a dark crimson red cauldron lid forged in the shape of a giant serpent. Besides the lid, there was also a special hole for ingredients to enter.

The top of the cauldron lid was littered with many fine holes made by Ice Silver. These had the effect of dissipating heat to prevent excessive heat from building up, which might lead to an explosion. On one side a transparent screen of Essence Ice was installed at the middle part of the medicine cauldron so that the whole refining process could be clearly seen by the alchemist.

The surface cauldron was engraved with the forms of wild untamed devil

beasts that seemed to almost leap off the cauldron.

Observing the beautiful appearance of the medicine cauldron, Xiao Yan nodded his head in satisfaction. Xiao Yan rubbed the ancient black ring, and Yao Lao appeared with a flash of light.

"En, it's a cauldron with two outlets. For an alchemic amateur like you, it's not bad at all," Yao Lao said indifferently as he cast a glance at the orifices of the snakes on the dark crimson red medicinal cauldron.

"A cauldron with two outlets?" Hearing the unfamiliar term, Xiao Yan's eyes blinked as he looked on doubtfully.

"Medicinal cauldrons also have their own set of tiers. The more outlets for fire a cauldron's furnace has, the higher tier a medicinal cauldron is and thus the rarer it is. Don't assume that one can just randomly make a few holes to add another few outlets. Outsiders don't even have a hint of discernment for the mysteries of these outlets. Outlets are the essence of a medicinal cauldron, and require extreme precision to polish to perfection. If one were made with even the slightest error, the whole medicinal cauldron would be considered junk. As such, the more outlets a medicinal cauldron has, the better the auxiliary effect is for an alchemist when refining. Of course, if you wish to control multiple outlets, you need very high soul perception. For the current you, to control two fire outlets is already the limit." Yao Lao laughed as he explained.

"For an Alchemist, the importance of a good Medicine Cauldron is akin to that of a good sword to a warrior."

Giving an almost indiscernible nod, Xiao Yan stared at this big cauldron in front him and asked a bit blankly: "Now what should I do?"

"For now it'd be better if you'd familiarize yourself with the medicinal cauldron. Press one hand against an outlet, and then rouse the Dou Qi within you and channel it inside." Yao Lao sat cross-legged within the cave as he directed Xiao Yan.

Nodding his head, Xiao Yan placed a hand on the outlet and slowly closed his eyes. Within his body, a revolving, dim and yellowish Qi slightly rippled. Dim, yellow Dou Qi bubbled out strand by strand, consequently

making the palm of his hand glow with a yellow light.

Once that dim, yellow Dou Qi reached his palm, it grew still. Then, as if it had encountered an abrupt and violent gravitational pull, it suddenly flooded out of his hand and passed into the outlet, drilling into the medicinal cauldron.

“Pu.....”

There was a muffled noise, then after the dim, yellow Qi had transferred through the fire outlet and unexpectedly transformed into a dim, yellow flame essence. Within the medicinal cauldron, it flickered and blazed.

The fact that his palm suddenly spit out fire, alarmed Xiao Yan and almost made him reflexively withdraw his hand. However, after sensing that his palm was cool, he panicked substantially less.

“En, not bad. On your first try, you’ve already succeeded in producing a flame.”

Observing the roiling flame within the medicinal cauldron, Yao Lao nodded and said in a low voice: “The flame that you’ve mustered together this time isn’t actually the refining flame. Right now you should concentrate on controlling the trace of Wood Element within your body and pour it into the medicine cauldron!”

Xiao Yan complied by closing both eyes. Bit by bit, his thoughts focused as his outstanding spiritual perception continuously scanned his body for that light trace of Wood Element.

After more than ten minutes, Xiao Yan finally found the Wood Element in his body for the first time. He let out a sigh of relief as he opened his eyes.

“Found it?” Seeing Xiao Yan opening his eyes, Yao Lao asked, astonished. As the former nodded his head, Yao Lao could not help but inwardly praise Xiao Yan. When Yao Lao first found the wood element in his body, it had took him almost half an hour. From this it can be seen how strong Xiao Yan’s spiritual perception is.

Xiao Yan stretched out a finger to lightly press on the other fire outlet.

Little by little, a stream of extremely weak green Qi flowed in.

Just as the green Qi entered the medicine cauldron, the light yellow flame within abruptly calmed down, as if there had been a chemical reaction. At this moment, even though Xiao Yan had not yet been able to control the flame, he could feel that the franticness within the flame had been tamed by the wood element. Furthermore, due to the principle that wood gives birth fire, the flame at this time was much more controlled and would last longer than before.

“Good.....” Satisfied, Yao Lao nodded his head as he reached out a finger to touch Xiao Yan’s forehead, transferring information directly into the latter’s head.

“This is my own healing medicine formula, you can use it for practice. I will guide you through as I warn you about the temperature of the flame and the composition of medical ingredients to refine.”

Xiao Yan squinted as he processed the new information in his head as he slightly inclined his head to acknowledge.

“Blood Clotting Powder: one stalk of Blood Clotting Grass, one Lively Fruit, two Poppy Flowers.....”

After Xiao Yan committed to memory the amount of each required alchemy ingredients, his spiritual perception gradually channeled into the medicinal cauldron as he diligently tried to control the mild flame.

Making a flicking motion with his finger over the ring, a dark red stalk of Blood Clotting Grass appeared in his palm. A little while later, Xiao Yan threw the stalk into the maw of the engraved serpent at the apex of the cauldron.

Once the Blood Clotting Grass was thrown in, Xiao Yan did not control the flame in time. The fire simply blazed upwards and in the blink of an eye, the stalk of Blood Clotting Grass turned into a pile of ash and the cauldron’s unique mechanism expelled it out of the cauldron.

Looking at this first failure, Xiao Yan laughed with a bit of embarrassment.

“Continue.” Yao Lao indifferently said.

Swallowing a mouthful of saliva, Xiao Yan once again threw in a stalk of Blood Clotting Grass. This time, the Blood Clotting Grass persisted within the fire for a while but as before, it turned into a pile of ashes.

“The temperature is too high.”

Xiao Yan wiped his sweat away. Now that he personally tried to refine a pill, Xiao Yan finally realized that this type of work, as expected, could not be easily accomplished by just any person.

After continuously burning up a whole twenty or so stalks of Blood Clotting Grass, with some difficulty, Xiao Yan finally had a grasp on the most suitable temperature for Blood Clotting Grass.

Again tossing in a stalk of Blood Clotting Grass, Xiao Yan’s expression grew solemn as his spiritual perception firmly suppressed the temperature of the flame. His eyes passed through the Ice Essence and unwaveringly fixated on the stalk of Blood Clotting Grass suspended within the flame.

The flame seethed about for a period of time and the Blood Clotting Grass finally started to shed its layer of skin and the juice accumulated within its leaves gradually began to evaporate into specks of faint, white powder. The essence of the Blood Clotting Grass had finally been successfully refined by this greenhorn, Xiao Yan.

Chapter 73: First Refinement

In the narrow cave the flames within the cauldron casted shadows onto the cavern walls, creating shadows of dancing fangs and claws of wild beasts.

Xiao Yan concentrated with every fiber of his being as he watched the surging flame attentively, his pale face was streaked with beads of sweat. Refining medicine for long periods of time was a task that consumed an extreme amount of Dou Qi. Since Xiao Yan's Qi Method was the lowest ranked Low Xuan, his Qi foundations and endurance were nothing special. Thus it was not an easy task for him to persevere for almost two hours in front of the cauldron.

Yao Lao squinted his eyes as he gazed upon Xiao Yan, who had once again successfully refined a Blood Clot Grass into a fine white powder. Knowing that Xiao Yan had already reached his limit, Yao Lao gave a slight nod and gently said: "Well done, take a break."

Hearing this, Xiao Yan's shoulders immediately dropped and his body softly fell to lie on the ice cold floor as if all the energy in his body had been suddenly drained away. Gasping for air, his chest rose and fell rapidly; battered with exhaustion, he could barely even lift a finger now.

"Training now would give the best effect."

Yao Lao said indifferently as he cast a glance towards the Xiao Yan who lifelessly laid on the ground.

Laziness and diligence clashed in the heart for a mere moment before Xiao Yan internally howled in anguish as he unwilling sat up. His trembling hands formed into a training seal as he slowly closed his eyes.

Seeing Xiao Yan's stance, Yao Lao laughed as his sight turned towards the ten plus jade cases before the cauldron. These cases were filled to the brim with pale white powder refined from the Blood Clot Grass and were results of the efforts of Xiao Yan.

From left to right, the pale white color of the powder became richer and

richer until the last case, in which the color of the powder had almost reached a pure white.

Gazing upon this extremely obvious improvement, Yao Lao felt pleasantly surprised as he nodded his head approvingly; in his heart he once again praised Xiao Yan's outstanding spiritual perception.

He shot a glance towards the Xiao Yan who was currently recovering his Dou Qi before sitting himself crosslegged against the stone wall, leisurely closing his eyes to recuperate. Xiao Yan had only refined the first type of ingredient, there were still two more types waiting for him to slowly practice on.

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After training close eyed for almost an hour, the Qi Cyclone within Xiao Yan's body once again emitted a bright light after it had previously gone dark from the depletion of Dou Qi before. Furthermore, the brightness this time seemed to be a little bit clearer than it was a few hours before.

Gradually opening his eyes, the powerless feeling from before had retreated by more than half. Stretching his neck, the cracking sounds made Xiao Yan sigh in happiness.

"Done training? Continue then." Yao Lao smiled as he opened his eyes to look upon the now lively Xiao Yan.

Bitterly laughing as he shook his head, Xiao Yan who had experienced the painful process of alchemy had finally understood that he had been 'conned' by Yao Lao. When Yao Lao had previously done alchemy, all he did was twirl his hands about as he refined the ingredients to create the elixirs that people would go crazy for. This simple looking process had left a strong impression in Xiao Yan's mind that alchemy was extremely easy. Yet now that Xiao Yan had tried a hand at it personally, he now knew that alchemy was more difficult than being a miner.

This understanding had come too late, thus Xiao Yan could only sigh as he once more sat before the cauldron and started to refine the essence of the other two types of medical ingredients.

Equipped with the previous experience of refining Blood Clot Grass, Xiao Yan, this time, was clearly much more relaxed than before. After burning eight Lively Fruits and ten Poppy Flowers, he finally managed to extract the components needed to make the healing medication.

From the Lively Fruit, an almost fully black and small kernel was obtained. This kernel had the effect of improving blood circulation. If an experienced mercenary was injured in the wilderness while lacking healing medication, often times, he would grind a Lively Fruit and use it to alleviate the injury.

From the Poppy Flower, a light red liquid was obtained. This kind of fluid had a numbing effect and can be used to relieve pain.

Eyeing the three medicines which had been arranged neatly in front of Xiao Yan, Yao Lao nodded slightly and quietly said: "All of the required ingredients have been refined, now fuse their medical abilities together. This is the most important step in alchemy."

With a deep sigh, Xiao Yan respectfully nodded. Proficiently throwing the pure white powder into the cauldron, he smoked it under a warm fire for about ten minutes until the pure white powder turned slightly reddish before speedily pouring the Poppy Flower liquid in too.

Just as the liquid entered the cauldron, it wrapped around the pure white powder. Boiling for a short time in the flame, the two ingredients slowly fused into a light, red and viscous liquid.

His spiritual perception strove to control the temperature of the flame as the viscous, light-red liquid was slowly smoked.

As it was continuously baked above the flame, the viscous liquid gradually changed into a dark red paste.

Through the transparent lens, Xiao Yan stared unwaveringly at the dark red paste within the cauldron. Slightly hesitating, he finally threw in the tiny black kernel from the Lively Fruit.

Though the tiny black kernel entered the cauldron, nothing happened. The tiny kernel bounced about in the flame, refusing to fuse into the dark

red paste.

“Different ingredients have different resistances to temperature, so you need to learn how to control the temperature of any part of the flame. In areas that require a low temperature, you have to suppress the flame while in areas that require high temperature, you have relax your control to increase the temperature of the flame....” Yao Lao lectured as he gazed upon Xiao Yan who was perspiring in worry.

Xiao Yan licked his dry lips as he nodded. He promptly divided a part of his spiritual perception to exert control over the flame below the tiny kernel to gradually increase its temperature.

“Bang.....”

As the spiritual perception relaxed its control over the temperature, a single uncontrolled flame fiercely soared up and burnt half of the tiny black kernel to ashes in an instant, causing Xiao Yan to break out in cold sweat as he hastened to desperately suppress the flame.

One part of his spiritual perception had to maintain the temperature of one side of the flame while another part had to increase the temperature of the other side of the flame. This kind of multitasking caused a headache for Xiao Yan.

However, after going through a few more perilous situations, Xiao Yan finally calmed down from his flustered state. He wiped away the sweat that had gathered on his forehead as he sighed deeply before concentrating the rest of his Dou Qi into the fire outlet.

Within the cauldron, the tiny black kernel could no longer bear it and finally ruptured under the increasing temperature of the flame. Fine jet-black powder gradually floated into the light red paste and dyed the latter in a deeper shade of color.

As the last pinch of jet-black powder floated into the paste, Xiao Yan finally let out a long sigh. His hands slowly separated from the fire outlet and the flame within the cauldron gradually died down.

At the sight of the panting Xiao Yan, Yao Lao faintly smiled as he waved

his hand, lifting the cauldron lid and settling it onto the floor. With his right hand, he willed the huge lump of crimson red paste to leap up, where it remained floating in midair.

Yao Lao glanced at the crimson red paste which was emitting a strong medicine smell. His hands made cutting motions in the air as the dark red paste was cut into at least a hundred tiny pieces.

Taking the Storage Ring from Xiao Yan, Yao Lao flicked it as over a hundred small jade bottles suddenly spread out all over the narrow cave.

After arranging the jade bottles, Yao Lao waved his hand again as the liquid like paste in the air accurately landed into the jade bottles.

Randomly choosing a jade bottle, Yao Lao smiled as he passed it over to Xiao Yan while bantering: “Congratulations, your first attempt at alchemy was a success!”

Impatiently receiving the jade bottle, Xiao Yan gazed at the slightly impure crimson red fluid within while in his heart feelings of excitement and pride welled up.

“Haha, from this point on, I can also be considered an alchemist!”

Chapter 74: Turning up Uninvited

As several days passed, Xiao Yan spent nearly every day beside the cauldron. Although these days were extremely exhausting, the Storage Ring, which was full of healing medicine, made him feel gratified as he rested.

Of course, another thing to be mentioned was that after almost five days of continuous alchemy, the Dou Qi in Xiao Yan's body unknowingly became much more powerful. Judging by his current progress, he had almost reached the One Star Dou Zhe level.

With these two pieces of good news, Xiao Yan managed to grit his teeth and survive the ordeal.

As Xiao Yan hid in the cave to painstakingly refine medicine, the situation in Wu Tan City continued to unravel. The atmosphere between Xiao and Jia Lie Clans had become increasingly strained, just two days ago the Jia Lie Clan took the opportunity to come up with various market rules that favored merchants, causing a large portion of the merchants who had originally been observing from the sidelines to begin moving to the marketplaces of the Jia Lie Clan.

Faced with a measure that was obviously aimed to rock the foundations of the Xiao Clan, all of the high ranking members of the Xiao Clan came to be possessed by a violent rage that threatened to evolve into a murderous intent.

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"God dammit, I can't take it anymore, in a mere five days, our Xiao Clan has lost at least 50% to 60% of its profits; if this continues all of our marketplaces will go bankrupt!" Within the Clan Meeting Room, the third Elder exclaimed in anger, an ominous glint on his face.

All the higher position clan members were seated within the huge hall; the fury in their hearts was expressed by their gloomy complexions.

"This truly cannot drag out any further..." The first Elder slowly spat out

each word, continuing, he said: “Although master Gu Ni from Primer Auction House has aided us by manufacturing over a hundred bottles of healing medicine, this amount is too little; it is completely incomparable to the massive amount from the Jia Lie Clan. Although we might be able to maintain a deadlock with the Jia Lie Clan in the short run, in the long run, as those healing medicines run out, we would once again arrive at the awkward situation before.”

The first Elder sighed before letting out a bitter laugh and saying: “Although if Gu Ni was willing to fully support us, based on quantity, we would definitely be able to drag it out with the first tier alchemist from the Jia Lie Clan. However, he is from Primer Auction House after all, they seldom involve themselves in the clash of clans. To have helped to such an extent is already very unexpected.”

Seated in the leader’s chair, Xiao Zhan nodded his head, a gloomy look on his face. Though the quality of the healing medicine that the Jia Lie Clan sold was low, the quantity was vast and the price was cheap. This suited the preferences of the mercenaries, who were often caught in bloody situations.

“If we could also get a first tier Alchemist, we would be able to contend against them...” In the big hall someone lamented.

Hearing this, Xiao Zhan helplessly shook his head. There were only a few Alchemists in Wu Tan City; to woo any one of those arrogant chaps was easier said than done. This time, the Jia Lie Clan had struck the lottery and actually received an alchemist’s help.

In the corner of the hall, Xiao Yu, Xiao Ning and the other members of the younger generation of the clan were also present. As they gazed upon the gloomy expressions on their elders, they did not dare carelessly interrupt and so they endured the stifling atmosphere in silence.

“Older sister, is that first tier alchemist really so strong? How could he have forced our Xiao Clan into this situation?” Somewhat unable to tolerate the oppressive atmosphere, Xiao Ning quietly inquired Xiao Yu who sat beside him.

Xiao Yu softly sighed, letting out a bitter laugh, she answered softly: "Indeed, the alchemist is a very unique profession... The strength of a first tier alchemist is at best in the Dou Zhe level and in a straightforward battle any of the elders in the clan could easily kill him. Yet the true terror of an alchemist is not in direct battle but rather that they are able to create elixirs that people go crazy for. With these elixirs, they possess the incomparable ability to rally supporters. Many strong practitioners are willing to serve under an alchemist for the sake of obtaining these elixirs."

"On the Dou Qi continent, many people compare an alchemist to a poisonous wasp's nest; once prodded, an alchemist would immediately gather an uncountable number of fighters. Faced with so many fighters, even if they are unable to kill you, they would still be able to tire you to death."

As Xiao Ning imagined the scene of being surrounded by fighters, he trembled as an envious look spread across his face.

"Don't be delusional, you should know about the harsh requirements to become an alchemist. The chances are even smaller than a meat pie dropping from the heavens." Rolling her eyes at Xiao Ning, Xiao Yu mercilessly splashed cold water over him.

Set back by Xiao Yu's words, Xiao Ning dispiritedly curled his lip as he said: "I'm afraid that our entire Xiao Clan does not have the fortune to come up with an alchemist."

Although Xiao Yu nodded in agreement to these words, in her mind a certain youth dressed in black garments abruptly popped up. Looking closely at the features of the youth, it seemed to be Xiao Yan...

Ruthlessly flinging away the thought, Xiao Yu whispered to herself in her heart: "How could I have thought of that little bastard? Humph, if someone with that kind of personality is able to become an alchemist, all of the alchemists in this world would be worthless."

After cursing Xiao Yan in her heart, Xiao Yu willed her gaze towards a corner by the window, there, a green clothed young maiden was quietly clasping a thick and simple book, occasionally moving her finger to flip a

page as her eyes scanned the contents of the book. This tranquil and elegant appearance drew the furtive gazes of many of her peers.

“Such a good girl, why must she favor that little bastard?” Xiao Yu grudgingly shook her head as she once again maintained her silence.

Quietly sitting beside the window, although her attention was on the book, Xun Er was able to sense the depressing atmosphere in the hall. Her willowy eyebrows slightly knitted together. No matter what was said, she had also stayed in the Xiao Clan for over ten years. Moreover, even if it was not for Xiao Yan, she would never let the Xiao Clan be beaten by the Jia Lie Clan that badly.

“Hah. I hope that those bastards won’t go overboard...” Xun Er sighed in her heart as she once again turned back to her book. With no Xiao Yan by her side, she practically had no reason to speak.

As the plans continued to be discussed within the hall, a clan guard hurriedly ran in and reported in a respectful tone: “Clan leader, there is a person dressed in a black cloak outside. He says that he has some collaboration matters to discuss with the clan leader.”

At these words, Xiao Zhan and the rest of the elders were slightly shocked. Mutually exchanging glances, their once gloomy expressions suddenly soared with ecstasy. A few of them simultaneously stood up together and urgently ordered: “Quickly invite him in!”

Spotting the looks on Xiao Zhan and the three elders, everyone in the hall was somewhat amazed, immediately exchanging glances with one another.

“Haha. No need to invite me in. Clan Leader Xiao, how have you been? This old man has come uninvited.” Yao Lao’s clear laughter resounded from beyond the door just as the sound of Xiao Zhan’s order faded.

Along with the laughter, a figure shrouded by a large black mantle unhurriedly walked into the hall under the crowd’s stare.

At the instant when the person dressed in a black gown stepped through the door, Xun Er, who had all along submersed herself in her book,

suddenly raised her eyebrows. Gradually lifting her small face, her autumn water eyes vigilantly stared at the black cloaked person who had just entered.

Chapter 75: Big Business

Staring at the man wearing a black cloak who had just entered, Xiao Zhan and the three elders promptly welcomed him; advancing with quick steps, Xiao Zhan showed a respectful smile and said: "Most esteemed guest , forgive me for I have been rather busy with the matters of the clan and was unable to come out to greet you Xiao Zhan, please forgive me. "

"Haha, no need to be so formal." Under the black mantle, an aged voice rang out.

Xiao Zhan eagerly nodded and gave a meaningful glance to the three elders, hinting them to promptly open up the path and said with a smile, "Please sit, most esteemed guest."

The man covered by a black cloak nodded and without being overly formal, directly walked up and sat on the seat next to the head of the table.

Seeing how respectfully Xiao Zhan was treating the man in the black cloak, the youths of the clan couldn't help but whisper among themselves. Myriads of curious glances unceasingly swept over that black cloaked man but upon hearing the elder say that he was an alchemist, their eyes suddenly became filled with ardor... and full of worship. No matter where, alchemists were the ones that had the most respected profession in the eyes of others.

"Sister, this person, isn't he the mysterious alchemist we saw during the auction the other day?" Xiao Ning's two eyes fixed on this man dressed in a black cloak as he tugged at Xiao Yu's sleeve, eagerly asking her.

"Yeah." Xiao Yu slowly nodded; her beautiful eyes were still staring at this silhouette covered by a black mantle, as her lovely face showed a slight expression of pleasant surprise: "I didn't think that this honorable sir would really come to our Xiao clan; it looks like what he said last time about cooperating with us wasn't just lip service... If we really obtain his help, the Xiao clan should be able to go through this predicament with ease. "

Hearing the whispers from the people around her, Xun Er wrinkled her brows and fixed her crystal clear eyes tightly at the stocky man in the black mantle. She didn't know why, but she felt that the man's gestures, his speech and his manners were not exactly harmonious.

After knitting her brows while pondering for a long time, Xun Er could only helplessly renounce this idea.

"Haha, sir; what brings you here?" Personally preparing a cup of tea, Xiao Yan asked with a smile.

"I was passing in the neighborhood, so I thought I'd come to visit your noble clan. I brought with me a few Foundation Elixirs that should be able to foster a good amount of youths from your side." Under this black gown, the elder's voice was quite joyous.

Having heard him, Xiao Zhan hurried to look around but didn't see the faintest trace of Xiao Yan. He couldn't help but bitterly smile.

"Haha, the Xiao family head doesn't need to call him out, I have already met the young master, a quite fine youth, he's quite to this old man's liking..." Waving his hands, he stopped Xiao Zhan from calling someone to get Xiao Yan. The tone of the black cloaked man was filled with a touch of admiration that he didn't conceal and made the youth hidden under the cloak quite embarrassed.

Hearing the black cloaked man's tone filled with admiration, the eyes of everyone in the hall were filled with envy. To get such a high evaluation from such an high level alchemist wasn't something that was easy to come by.

"All the good stuff happens only to this brat." As he twitched his mouth, full of unwillingness, Xiao Ning's tone was full of envy.

Xiao Yu, completely helpless, sighed, her jade-like hands on her cheeks, she silently whispered: "Is that brat so good? How come I never realized it before?"

Hearing the compliment, Xiao Zhan's face revealed a huge smile and in his eyes, a glimpse of pride could faintly be seen.

“Xiao clan leader, I recently heard that your clan was facing hardships, right?” Xiao Zhan’s smile hadn’t stretched out completely before it was struck down by the oppressive voice of Yao Lao.

Nodding in agreement, Xiao Zhan smiled bitterly, “Surely this sir knows our Xiao clan’s current situation, right?”

“Mhh, I know a bit about it.” Nodding, the black cloaked man revealed a smile.

“Ai, in the current Xiao Clan, our business is already no more than half than what it was in the past. In the long term, I’m afraid that our influence is also going to sink down to that of a second-rate clan.” Xiao Zhan sighed in regret, wrinkling his brows. He seemed to age a few years at that particular moment.

“Haha, Even though I am not so close with Xiao Clan, I am getting along quite well with your son. If you, Xiao Clan leader, are not afraid that this old man may have some bad intentions, how about cooperating together?” The black cloaked man smiled gently.

Having heard him, Xiao Zhan was startled at first but soon became wildly joyful; that was all he was what he was waiting for... He gave a look full of excitement to the three elders and soon after, nodded without the slightest hesitation: “Sir, we want to cooperate with you; we’d love to in fact.”

The assistance of an alchemist above the second tier was something that Xiao Clan could not even dream of. Xiao Zhan didn’t think that his own clan had something that could interest a second tier alchemist and hearing the alchemist’s words, that he would cooperate with the Xiao Clan, Xiao Zhan deduced that the reason of the alchemist helping should be because of Xiao Yan. With such an opportunity, Xiao Zhan would be fighting to get the chance.

Seeing Xiao Zhan’s approval, the black cloaked man nodded and a white palm appeared from the cloak. On his finger was a red-colored ring and with a flick, it immediately flickered in red light...

Staring at his palm, as white as a youth’s, Xiao Zhan was shocked. The

palm gave him a... familiar feeling.

But Xiao Zhan didn't have the time to ponder about the cause of his sensation of *déjà vu*; immediately, a pile of jade bottles appeared on the table.

The huge table was, in a blink of eye, entirely covered with little jade bottles; there wasn't a single place left empty.

Staring at these jade bottles that appeared out of thin air inside this big hall, except from the green clad lady that was near the window, all the other clansmen, without the slightest exception, were shocked by this tremendous amount of pills to the point that they could hardly breath.

"Here are 1283 bottles of the healing medicine, "Blood Clotting Powder". It isn't the best healing drug in terms of quality but compared to the Jia Lie Clan's "Return Spring Powder", its effects are lot more outstanding." Watching the stunned people in the hall, the black cloaked person carelessly introduced his "merchandise".

Xiao Zhan, shocked with mouth wide open, took a deep breath of the surrounding ice-cold air, "This is truly a big business!"

Chapter 76: Co-operation

In the silent hall, a crowd of red-hot gazes unwaveringly stared at the little jade bottles on the table which numbered over a thousand. Almost no one had ever personally seen such a large quantity of elixirs.

Her pink tongue licked her red lips subconsciously, Xiao Yu was equally dazed at the sight of so many elixirs. A moment later, she shook herself out of the daze and with a sparkle in her eyes, she turned her sight to watch the black cloaked person.

The green clothed maiden seated by the window shoot a glance at the table full of small jade bottles with an astonished look flashing within those beautiful autumn water eyes. Her vision once again swept across the black cloaked person. Unable to find anything suspicious, she continued to look at the simple book in her hand.

In the absolute silence of the hall, the black cloaked person coughed softly, bringing the person next to him: Xiao Zhan, back to reality.

“Eh.....” Xiao Zhan blushed as he let out an embarrassed laughter. As he looked to the black cloaked alchemist, the respect in his gaze had gained another level. Not every alchemist would be able to effortlessly bring out over a thousand bottles of healing medicine at once.

“Sir, you should know about the Xiao Clan’s current situation, we need healing medication to pull back our lost popularity. To the Xiao Clan, your actions are undoubtedly providing help when we need it the most.” Xiao Zhan exclaimed gratefully. Slightly muttering to himself, Xiao Zhan hesitated before he finally spoke out again: “How about this, our Xiao Clan will take the responsibility of selling these healing medicine. As for the earnings, sir you will take 90% while the remaining 10% will go to us. Although I feel it is brazen of us to do so, after all, we still need some money to put things in order. Sir, what do you think about that?”

As he finished outlining his proposition, Xiao Zhan nervously gazed at the black cloaked man before him, afraid that he will not be satisfied with the terms. The current Xiao Clan could only completely depend on this

mysterious alchemist.

“Haha.” The black cloaked alchemist laughed before shaking his head.

Seeing this action, the expression on Xiao Zhan’s face slightly changed. Just as he was about to forfeit the last 10%, an old voice interjected which left him dazed and at a complete loss.

“Clan Leader Xiao is too polite, although the elixir is refined by me, making sales is not an easy job. How can I possibly take advantage of you.....let us split it evenly, 50-50, haha.”

At the black cloaked man’s words, the originally anxious three elders and the rest of the clansmen suddenly opened their mouths in shock. It was quite a while before they subconsciously touched their ears, skeptical if the words were genuine or not. 50-50? This.....this sir, isn’t he too considerate to Xiao Clan? Given the current situation, even if he wanted all 100% of the profits, no one in the Xiao Clan would dare object.

“Meat pies have dropped from the skies.....” This phrase resounded in everyone’s hearts as they looked towards each other.

After a long while more, Xiao Zhan gradually regained his wits. He let out a deep breath then laughed bitterly, saying: “Sir, your words have overwhelmed us, we are already truly grateful for your timely aid; how can we possibly take any further advantage of you?”

As if it was of little importance, the black cloaked man waved his hands about and smugly laughed: “This little bit of profits holds no interest for me; if it were not for the fact that you would never rest easy, truth to be told I would be too lazy to collect even 50%.”

Hearing this sort of arrogant explanation, Xiao Zhan could only shake his head as he smiled bitterly.

“I’ll leave these elixirs for you to sell. If I have some time in the future, I will come and check up on them.” The black cloaked man stood up and smiled as he said: “I still have other matters, so I won’t be staying. Clan Leader Xiao need not send me off; go and set up arrangements for the sales instead, haha.” With a tone of dismissal, he walked out of the hall

under everyone's stares.

Before completely exiting the room, the black cloaked alchemist's steps suddenly stopped. Laughing faintly, he said: "Before I go, I'll say a few words more. Xiao Yan really isn't bad. Haha, goodbye."

Hearing this statement, Xiao Zhan rubbed his head. He was about to say something but the black cloaked man had already breezed out of the hall, gradually fading out of sight around the corner.

Staring at the black cloaked man's disappearing figure, Xiao Zhan let out a small sigh after a long while as he laughed bitterly, saying: "It seems that the relationship between Yan Er and this sir is a bit out of the ordinary. Or else, how could this person who isn't even familiar with us help us like this?"

The three elders all shared a glance and also let out a sigh and nodded. From the way the old alchemist had been expressing praise about Xiao Yan, he clearly looked favorably on Xiao Yan and his help to Xiao Clan would definitely be tied to Xiao Yan.

Within the hall, all the members of the Xiao Clan who were of Xiao Yan's age who had heard the black cloaked man's passing words, showed undisguised envy on their faces.

The blue clothed maiden near the window slightly inclined her head, her vision gazing through the window as the figure turned around the corner. Her willow brows slightly knitting together, an expression of doubt flashed across her delicate face.

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Outside of the Xiao Clan, the black cloaked man slowly continued forward until he reached a less crowded area. Only then did a young voice softly grumble from within the black gown: "Teacher, do you have nothing better to do than to point me out every single sentence. If they find out about this, I cannot guarantee that I will not offer you up."

"Hehe, I was only expressing my feelings. If it were not for Xiao Zhan who treated you well since you were young, where would I find such a

good disciple? Thus it is only appropriate for me to thank him.” The old voice bantered and laughed: “If I just gave them the pills, your cautious father would definitely believe that I had some ulterior motives.”

Helplessly shaking his head, Xiao Yan looked around before asking: “Where shall we go now?”

“Towards the auction house so we can pass the Qi Gathering Powder to them; so as to avoid owing them a debt, that is something that I hate the most..... Furthermore, you have burnt up all the medical ingredients for practice, it is time to purchase other medical ingredients.” Yao Lao muttered as he smiled.

Xiao Yan nodded to acknowledge these words. With some expectations, he smiled sweetly and asked: “Teacher, can the current me be counted as a first tier alchemist?”

“Tch, you think that just because you refined a few days worth of medicine you’ve become an alchemist? Healing medication is the simplest kind of elixir, refining that kind of stuff is nothing to be proud of.” Yao Lao sneered, ruthlessly dousing Xiao Yan with cold water.

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan was a bit gloomy: “Then when can I genuinely be considered as a first tier alchemist?”

“In the alchemy world, the minimum requirement for a first tier alchemist is to be able to refine a pellet type pill and not the simple kind where all you have to do is mix essences into a paste.”

“It seems that there’s quite a distance for me to go.” Hearing these requirements, Xiao Yan helplessly shook his head and strode forward, advancing towards the auction house in the city square.

Chapter 77: Breaking the Supply of Ingredients

Primer Auction House, the reception lobby.

On top of a table, there was a small jade case, in which a medicine pill lay peacefully. Due to the smooth, round, and glossy pill, a strong, nice fragrance pervaded the room, causing everyone to feel attentive.

Watching the pills, the two managers of the Primer Auction House, Ya Fei and Gu Ni, couldn't hide the glee on their faces.

Through the black gown, Xiao Yan could see that the two were forgetting themselves in front of him, which caused him to inwardly express disapproval and ridicule them: "If they knew that Yao Lao skimped on the materials when he made this Qi Gathering Powder, what would their expressions be like?"

The Qi Gathering Powder Xiao Yan brought was very much inferior to the product he himself used and yet this powder, half-heartedly created by Yao Lao, was able to surprise both Ya Fei and Gu Ni.

"My dear sir, your alchemy techniques are truly admirable. The Qi Gathering Powder you created can already be compared to that made by fifth tier alchemists." Gu Ni wholeheartedly praised the light green pill.

Under the black cloak, an old voice lightly rang out: "Please receive this Qi Gathering Powder well. After receiving so much help, I just had to express my thanks or else my conscience would be deeply perturbed."

"Haha, sir, you are too kind. You are a guest here and the favors between us are simply favors between friends." Ya Fei smiled while lifting up the case with jade-like hands.

Yao Lao refrained from commenting. Not only did Yao Lao not believe those words, even Xiao Yan scoffed at them as well. If it were really as she said, the Primier Auction House would have been bankrupt already.

From inside his clothes, Xiao Yan produced a piece of paper and handed

it to Ya Fei. The old voice rang out: “Please do me another favor by finding these materials for me.”

Eagerly accepting the paper, Ya Fei quickly glanced over it before complying with a smile. After the previous time, she dared not show any hesitation now.

Ya Fei called forth a serving girl with a wave and passed the paper to her, instructing her to prepare the ingredients as soon as possible.

Teacup in his hands, Xiao Yan lightly sipped. Suddenly, he thought of something and after a few seconds, Yao Lao’s voice could be heard: “Miss Ya Fei, I have a question.”

Hearing Yao Lao start to talk, Ya Fei smiled sweetly and gently replied: “Please go ahead sir.”

“The Jia Lie Clan has bought a lot of medicine ingredients from here right?” Yao Lao questioned in a monotonous voice.

At this question, Ya Fei’s heart slightly tightened and the expression on her lovely face slightly changed. Stealthily sharing a quick glance with Gu Ni, she silently hesitated for a moment before replying: “Previously the Jia Lie Clan had indeed purchased almost 100,000 gold worth of medicine ingredients and these medical ingredients..... also possess some healing properties.”

Slightly inclining his head, his old voice suddenly disappeared into silence.

This sudden change in atmosphere from the black cloaked man caused Ya Fei’s heart to feel somewhat nervous; she long ago knew that the former was preparing to help the Xiao Clan and yet the auction house kept selling large amounts of medicine ingredients to the Jia Lie Clan. Though she does not know his temperament, it is highly likely that this old gentleman would hold some grudge against the auction house.

The mood in the hall gradually became oppressive, looking towards the silent black cloaked man, Ya Fei started to feeling restless. If it were not for Gu Ni constantly stopping her with his looks, she would have opened

her mouth long ago.

“Both of you should know what I intended to do by buying so much medicine ingredients last time right?” A good while later, the old voice finally broke the stifling silence.

Lightly nibbling on her red lips, Ya Fei slightly nodded her head and replied in a low tone: “Sir had intended to refine the ingredients into healing medication to aid the Xiao Clan, yes?”

“Just before I came, I handed over all of the refined healing medicine to the Xiao Clan.” Slightly nodding, Yao Lao said in a deep voice: “Perhaps in another two days, the Xiao Clan and the Jia Lie Clan will start to use healing medicine to battle for popularity in Wu Tan City.”

Faced with this kind of topic, Ya Fei did not know how to reply, thus she could only cleverly maintain her silence.

“The manufacturing of healing medication requires a large amount of low grade medical ingredients. In Wu Tan City, besides Primer Auction House, no other medicine stall has the capabilities to provide such a large amount.” Seeing the wordless Ya Fei, Yao Lao continued to remark to himself.

“In the later stages of this healing medication battle, besides the price and quality, having a sufficient supply of medicine ingredients is a key factor.”

“Thus I hope that Primer Auction House will decline to provide the Jia Lie Clan with medicine ingredients from now on!”

Just as Yao Lao’s voice resounded out, Xiao Yan’s line of sight penetrated through the black mantle and focused upon the mature beauty who was as lovely as a fox spirit. He had less than two months left in Wu Tan City and thus, within this time, he had to help his father to defeat the Jia Lie Clan. Only then could he leave on the training journey with Yao Lao at ease.

Ya Fei’s charming face slightly changed as she heard Yao Lao’s words. In a difficult position, she said: “Sir, our Primer Auction House has a rule that

forbids us from involving in any kind of conflicts between the clans. If we agree to your request, that would be tantamount to indirectly helping the Xiao Clan, this is not in accordance to our rules.....”

“I can refine two Qi Gathering Pills for you free of costs.” Yao Lao said, undisturbed.

“Sir, it is not a problem of elixirs, truly.....” The enticement of two Qi Gathering Pills caused Ya Fei’s smooth hands to tremble, however she continued to endure.

“Three pills.....”

“Sir.....” Ya Fei forced a smile, right beside her, Gu Ni’s face contorted, three Qi Gathering Pills? That would be worth at least 500,000 gold right?

“Five pills!” An aged voice armed with an indifferent tone relentlessly smashed against the baseline in Ya Fei’s heart.

“Hrrrr.....” Ya Fei’s large eyes screwed shut as she lightly inhaled a breath of ice-cold air. After a long time, her eyes abruptly opened, Ya Fei let out a bitter laugh as she said: “Sir, you’ve won. From now on, Primer Auction House will never again provide the Jia Lie Clan with any medical ingredients!”

“Miss Ya Fei’s will is indeed somewhat beyond my expectations; one month later I will bring over the goods. Of course only if Primer Auction House does not let me down.” Yao Lao said as he let out a small laugh.

“Sir, be at ease, Ya Fei knows who is important and who is not very clearly.”

In any case, Ya Fei had already experienced many years in the auction house, thus she quickly calmed down. Between the Jia Lie Clan and an alchemist who was at the very least fourth tiered, there was absolutely no comparison. The choice was not hard to make, actually, the true difficulty laid in how to select the best moment to earn the greatest profits and Ya Fei was very satisfied with the current outcome.

Chapter 78: Training and Training and then Breakthrough

Only after seeing the black clothed man walked out of the lounge, satisfied with the ingredients in his hand, could Ya Fei finally relax her shoulders. Her body was cuddled-up on top of the chair, making her look like a curled-up fox. This lethargic position of hers had a peculiar charm to it.

"This dear sir... is truly daring." Said Ya Fei with her head stuck to the cool back of the chair.

Beside her, Gu Ni was rubbing his forehead, sighing: "Five pills of Gathering Qi Powder...It's true that he's a fourth tier alchemist, but still, isn't his way of conducting business a bit grand?"

Ya Fei nodded and pursed her red, small lips before proceeding to mock herself: "I thought I could last against his pressure, but who would've thought..."

Gu Ni laughed, replying: "If it were me in your shoes, I'm afraid I would've gave in by the time he mentioned the third pill. You were able to exceed my expectations and persevere until the fifth, so be proud of it."

"What I showed was perseverance? Upon hearing his offer, my mind blanked out and so I wasn't able to think straight. But who would've thought...that he would be so forward with his request and threw in two extra pills." Said Ya Fei while rolling her eyes. She couldn't refrain from laughing at the situation.

"Well facts are facts and your mind blanking out helped the Primer Auction House rake in an extra 400,000 income." Expressed Gu Ni while laughing after he heard her explanation.

Ya Fei used her hand to cover up her mouth, letting out a few tender laughs. As she started to get up from her chair, she sighed: "Looks like the Jia Lie Clan is in for it now."

Gu Ni agreed as well, nodding his head.

“But doesn’t it seem a bit suspicious? Isn’t our dear sir supposed to be a complete stranger to the Xiao Clan? Why is he helping them so much? He’s even willing to spare five pills of Qi Gathering Powder to cut off the Jia Lie Clan’s supply chain,” Ya Fei said while a hint of suspicion flashed across her eyes.

“Who knows... Our respected alchemist sure is mysterious, isn’t he? I didn’t know that the Jia Ma Empire had a figure like him,” Said Gu Ni helplessly.

Ya Fei nodded slightly, her eyes wandering. After muttering a bit, she replied: “Looks like having a phenomenal relationship with the Xiao Clan will be a must. With these pills, I’ve increased the profits of the auction house by four-fold. Let’s see if anyone can surpass me at the next employee assessment, shall we?”

After these words were said, the ends of her red lips formed a smile. With hands behind her back, she exited the lounge while humming a song to herself.

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Walking out of the auction house, Xiao Yan let out a long sigh, in a low voice he said: “Teacher, thank you very much.”

“What’s there to thank, if the Jia Lie Clan is not stamped to the ground would you be able to concentrate when I bring you on the training journey?” Yao Lao helplessly replied.

“Hehe.” Xiao Yan grinned, without any further words he followed his usual twisting and turning about the streets routine before taking off the black mantle in an empty corner and carefully exiting the street, heading towards the Xiao Clan.

Back at the clan, when Xiao Yan occasionally met another clan member, he could feel that their gazes were filled with even more envy. Evidently, word of what had happened in the hall today had spread amongst the clan.

Xiao Yan ignored these looks as he continued his slow journey towards

his room. As he turned a corner, a girl in red suddenly appeared in a head on collision course. Thankfully Xiao Yan braked to a halt in time, successfully avoiding the awkward crash that had threatened to unfold.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge? I've finally found you." The girl in red retreated a step back and lifted her head. Her young and pure face contained its own type of charm. The combination was a bit contradictory, causing the girl to have a little more indescribable charm compared to other girls of the similar age; this kind of charm even made Xiao Yan glance a few more times.

This girl whose face was filled with joy was none other than Xiao Mei.

Xiao Yan's gaze swept across Xiao Mei's pretty face. Rubbing his nose, he asked in a monotonous voice: "Is there anything?"

As she heard this somewhat unfamiliar greeting, Xiao Mei's radiant face slightly darkened, in a low voice she answered: "Clan Leader wants Xiao Yan ge-ge to make a trip to the study room."

"Hmm?" Slightly startled, Xiao Yan nodded and smiled in reply: "Okay got it, thanks." He waved goodbye before turning towards the study room located in the front courtyard.

"Xiao Yan biao-ge, thank you for before." Xiao Mei softly said as she watched Xiao Yan's straightforward and clearcut steps walking away. A flash of disappointment could be seen in her eyes as she bit her lip.

Xiao Yan paused his step as he elegantly waved towards Xiao Mei without turning, coolly replying: "No problem."

Staring at Xiao Yan's retreating figure, all of a sudden, Xiao Mei gathered her courage to ask: "Xiao Yan biao-ge, will you be participating in the enrollment test for Jia Nan Academy?"

"Maybe." With both hands on the back of his head, Xiao Yao slowly and gradually left, leaving behind this word.

When Xiao Mei heard Xiao Yan's reply, her overcast but pretty face finally brightened. Pinching her hands into a fist, she stood on the spot as she looked as Xiao Yan's figure finally faded from sight before lightly and

bitterly sighing and turning around to leave.

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Xiao Yan strolled about in the clan before he finally arrived in front of a spacious room. Lightly knocking on the door, he slowly pushed the door open and entered.

In the room, Xiao Zhan and the three elders were discussing something but as they saw Xiao Yan enter, they closed their mouths in unison.

“Father, you were looking for me?” With a smile on his face, Xiao Yan walked up and asked.

Xiao Zhan smiled back as he nodded his head, glancing at the three elders, he hesitated before asking in a low voice: “You should have seen that old sir right?”

“Yes.” Xiao Yan inclined his head, naturally he knew what Xiao Zhan was referring to.

“Do you know where he came from?” Xiao Zhan muttered.

“I’ve only known him for a short time, how could I find out about his origins?” These were Xiao Yan’s heart-felt words as he really did not know exactly where Yao Lao came from.

“But I know that he is an alchemist.” Xiao Yan smiled and added.

“Nonsense.” Xiao Zhan rolled his eyes as he smiled whole scolding playfully.

Xiao Zhan shook his head and laughed, with an excellent mood, he continued to ask Xiao Yan a few more questions about Yao Lao. However, Xiao Yan’s muddled and silly replies meant that in the end, Xiao Zhan did not manage to find out anything.

“You little brat, I can’t even tell if you’re pretending.” As he gazed at a seemingly completely ignorant Xiao Yan, Xiao Zhan could not help but shake his head helplessly. With a flourish of his hand, he continued to speak: “Forget it, go and continue whatever it is you were doing, if you meet that old sir in the future, try not to offend him. The future of the

Xiao Clan depends on him.”

Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders, declining to comment.

“Ermph..... Xiao Yan, your current aura seems some what..... strong.”
The First Elder stared at Xiao Yan and suddenly stuttered out.

At the First Elder’s words, Xiao Zhan was also startled, concentrating his gaze to sweep across Xiao Yan. A moment later, his mouth slowly gaped open and he let out in amazement: “You.....you have made a breakthrough to Dou Zhe?”

Hearing these words, the corners of the Second and Third elder mouths pulled apart, as they stared in disbelief at the youth in front of them.

“Hic.....” Xiao Yan scratched his head before innocently spreading out his hands: “I think so, I was just training and training as usual and then somehow made a breakthrough.....”

The corners of Xiao Zhan’s eyes jumped, shocked at this development. He didn’t know whether to laugh or cry and said: “What kind of ‘training’ was that?”

Over this period of time, Xiao Zhan had already gotten used to the miracles created by Xiao Yan. With a wave of his hand, Xiao Zhan forced a smile and said: “It’s good that you made a breakthrough, if you have some time go to the rank testing association to receive a rank badge.”

Xiao Yan nodded, the corners of his mouth raising playfully: “Then can I leave now? Honestly, I just trained and trained and then broke through.....”

“You can get going already.....” Rolling his eyes, Xiao Zhan playfully scolded him. This young fellow was simply ruffling people’s feathers. Did he truly not know that when these three elders were condensing their Qi Cyclone, they failed twice in a row before becoming a Dou Zhe?

Staring at the stiff faces of the three elders, Xiao Yan grinned and broke out into laughter. Only after Xiao Zhan began scolding him again did he scurry out of the study.

Hearing the fading laughter of that youth, the three elders faces slightly loosened up. Looking at each other, they couldn't help but laugh with faces full of bitterness.

Chapter 79: Counter-Attack by the Xiao Clan

After receiving the secret aid of Xiao Yan in the form of the large quantity of healing medication, though the Xiao Clan did not publicize this news, they had already secretly started to prepare for their counter-attack against the Jia Lie Clan.

The events that occurred in the clan hall were kept a secret by Xiao Zhan and the three elders; everything regarding the healing medicine had been classified as the highest scale of prohibition. None of the clan members could mention this to the outsiders; if any one were to leak information, that person shall be punished according to the clan's rule.

Along with the silence of the Xiao family, the behavior of the Jia Lie clan became more and more arrogant, using all kinds of tricks and enticements without restraint to pull away all the customers of the Xiao family's market.

Even with this, the Xiao Clan remained silent.

Seeing the Xiao family watching in silence, some of the small forces allied with them became disappointed and also started to secretly prepared to move to protect themselves.

With an atmosphere a little bit stranger than normal, two days' time quietly passed.

It was another day of radiant and enchanting sunny weather while Jia Lie clan's market was as hot and crowded like always. On the main street, people's head were flowing like water. On the "Return of Spring Powder" stall, there was an even larger crowd of people; the sound of shouting, scolding, and scuffles all gathered in one place. The deafening voices pierced through the clouds.

Behind the brown medicine counter, a medicine salesman of the Jia Lie clan was watching the arguing mercenaries fighting over the medicine. The smile on his face had a prideful look, knowing he had an advantage by

being the only supplier of the medicine.

Jia Lie Ku was a core member of the Jia Lie clan and was in charge of Jia Lie's clan most popular market.

Standing on the second floor of the reception hall, Jia Lie Ku looked down from high above upon the big streets of crowded people; his fat and oily face was filled with a complacent smile.

During this period of time, "Return of Spring Powder" had sold far more than Jia Lie clan's initial estimates. Under the huge temptation of benefits, the Jia Lie clan was no longer satisfied as they moved the price from 100 gold to 300 gold,

Initially the many mercenaries were disgusted by the price increase, however there was no other supplier for the "Return of Spring Powder", thus they could only make a din and complain for a while before grudgingly accepting the reality of getting cheated.

Jia Lie Ku lightly hummed a small tune as his eyes pulled into a line and happily said: "Even if you don't buy, other people will still buy....."

Jia Lie Ku extended his short and fat hand to block the rays of the sun, unable to endure it in front of the warehouse. He wiped the sweat off his forehead as he grumbled: "Damn, it's way too hot today, looks like I'll have to release some of my 'hot spunk' tonight to cool off. Tch tch, the young girl from last time was so refreshing and lively." As he recalled the ecstasy of that forbidden place, Jia Lie Ku was filled with an unbearably impatience, yet again wiping his sweat. Then his brows suddenly wrinkled up at the sight of a disturbance at the entrance.

"Damnit, fighting again? These mercenaries are all brawn and no brain, do they not know that it costs money to fix the things they break?" As Jie Lie Ku gazed at the disturbance, he could not help but curse in irritation.

"The Xiao Clan marketplace has also started selling healing medication!!"

Just when Jia Lie Ku was preparing to send guards to settle the disturbance, a loud shout was suddenly heard from the main street.

When Jia Lie Ku heard this sudden shout, the fat all over his body jiggled like a mountain crashing into the sea and on his face, his complexion slightly changed. However, a moment later he sneered and said: "Looks like there's no hope left for the Xiao Clan, to actually come up with this kind of methods, they are practically asking for death."

The shout had caused the once noisy main street to elapse into a period of silence, however, as everyone started looking at each other in dismay, one by one, the crowd started cursing: "Damnit, don't even think about using this kind of dirty tactics to steal the place I had been queuing half a day for."

It was clear that these people believed that the shout was a ploy to take the chance to shamelessly push to the front of the queue. After all, this kind of trick was common during this period of time.

After cursing, these people continued their rush for the "Return of Spring Powder" again.

Of course, not everyone had these thoughts. A small portion of the mercenaries who were sick and tired of the overbearing conduct of the Jia Lie Clan decided to check. After hesitating for a while, they chose to squeeze out of the street and head towards the Xiao Clan marketplace, half in doubt yet half in belief.

Standing upstairs Jia Lie Ku looked at the still extremely popularity on the main street. He could not help but laugh proudly and spoke shadily: "Xiao Clan? Hey, lets see how long you can persevere. Later on in Wu Tan city, the Jia Lie clan may be the only big clan. The times of the 3 influential clans? Hehe, those days have left forever!"

The effect of the shout from before on the busy marketplace was like a leaf dropping into the vast ocean, it barely made any ripples' the popularity of the Jia Lie Clan was not in the least bit affected.

Naturally, this was only temporary.

Half an hour after the shout, a few burly men wearing mercenary garb appeared before the marketplace entrance of the Jie Lie Clan. They rudely barged into the marketplace, bumping and pushing over the guards. With

gleeful faces, they lifted the green jade bottles in their hands high into the air as they shouted out in unison, momentarily suppressing the noise of the marketplace.

“The Xiao Clan is also selling healing medication!!”

Their unified shout caused the marketplace to fall into silence as everyone’s gazes turned to the source of the shout, a flash of understanding in their eyes.

One of the burly mercenaries who had just barged in hurriedly jumped onto a large rock nearby. With a “Qiang” sound, he drew the broadsword at his side before gritting his teeth as he pulled it over his arm, drawing a fresh line of blood.

Lifting his bloodied arm for all to see, the burly man tilted the green jade bottle in his other hand as a thick and viscous crimson red liquid slowly poured out to cover the wound.

Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, the thick and viscous crimson red liquid invaded the wound. A moment later, the flow of the blood that was previously surging out slowed and to everyone’s surprise, the blood had already congealed to form a thin layer over the wound.

On the main street, the gazes of all who had personally seen this scene suddenly lit up with passion: this kind of rapid staunching effect was essential to any mission!

“This is the new product sold by the marketplaces of the Xiao Clan called “Blood Clotting Medicine”! Not only is it more effective, but its price is also lower than the “Spring of Return Powder” by more than half! What are you people waiting for? Do you enjoy being extorted like idiots? Still not dispersing?” The burly mercenary held up the jade bottle as he cracked open his mouth and laughed savagely.

The main street was in silence.

One of the mercenaries who had just entered the marketplace blankly stared at the green bottle in the burly man’s hand. A split second later, he abruptly turned around and ran.....

Gazing upon the shadow of the man who had desperately run out of the marketplace, The crowd in the marketplace slightly wavered before loudly moving off, together, their steps caused the ground to tremble as the crowd frantically stampeded out of the marketplace.

On the rock, a strange smile floated upon the face of the burly mercenary at the sight of the frantic crowd. As a wind blew across the clothes of the burly man, a Xiao Clan emblem was faintly exposed.....

After the huge commotion, the originally bustling marketplace was suddenly deserted. Besides the few merchants who were still dumbstruck at the scene, there was barely anyone left on the main street.

“The Xiao Clan..... has started their counter-attack.”

This thought raced across all of the merchants as they gazed upon the now empty main street.

They exchanged gazes and as one they lifted their heads to look upon Jia Lie Ku. At this moment, the once gleeful fatty was already paralyzed on the spot with a deathly pale complexion on his face.

Meanwhile, in the other marketplaces of the Jia Lie Clan, similar situations were occurring.....

Chapter 80: Alchemist Liu Xi

The atmosphere in the brightly lit hall felt stifling and oppressive.

In the middle of the hall stood a table and at its center rested a small green jade bottle. From that bottle, a faint medicine smell emanated.

Many people were seated within the hall. From their attire, it was evident that they were the many upper echelons of the Jia Lie Clan; Jia Lie Ku was also seated among them.

In the hall, on the leftmost side, reclined a white clad youth lazily against the back of a chair. In truth, the youth would have looked rather charming, if it weren't for the lust filled look frequently flashing across his eyes, degrading his image. While he reclined, one of his hands could be seen slowly burrowing into the clothes of the pretty maid beside him. Even though there were so many people around him, no one seemed to care about such an unbridled action.

The pretty maid's cheeks slightly paled with the youth's vulgar act, but she did not even make a sound. But it was clear that a trembling, restrained look was brewing in her eyes as her tender body continuously shuddered.

"This is the 'Blood Clotting Medicine' that the Xiao Clan suddenly came up with and now, our popularity in the markets has already begun to plummet." Jia Lie Bi gazed upon the small green bottle on the table with a gloomy face, acting as if he did not see any of the youth in white's rude actions.

"How could the Xiao Clan have healing medication? Could it be that they have also managed to get an Alchemist?" Jia Lie Ao, who often clashed with Xiao Yan, cast a glance at the man in white besides him before frowning and asking.

Jia Lie Bi squinted his old wrinkled eyes, an ugly expression on his face: "Does anyone remember the mysterious alchemist we met at the auction house? At that time, he seemed to favor the Xiao Clan. If this 'Blood Clotting Medicine' is refined by him, then we are in big trouble. As you all

may know, that person could be a third tier alchemist.”

Hearing the term third tier alchemist, the white clothed youth finally stopped the hand that was roving about the maid’s body reluctantly. He stepped forward and picked up the small green bottle to take a small whiff before pouring out a little of the contents and lightly rubbing it between his fingers. With a sneer, he concluded: “A third tier alchemist? Bull. This Blood Clotting Medicine is indeed more effective than the Return of Spring Powder but based on it’s quality, the person who refined it is obviously of a lower tier than me. The greater effectiveness of the medicine is due to the unique recipe.”

At this information, everyone seated inwardly let out a sigh of relief. If the Xiao Clan had really obtained the help of a third tier alchemist then the Jia Lie Clan would have probably been doomed.

“From my experience, it is highly likely that the alchemist from the Xiao Clan is just a complete novice who somehow managed to borrow this recipe, from god knows where, to manufacture this Blood Clotting Medicine.” On the face of the white clothed youth, there was only indifference and disdain.

“Hehe, being able to see a maker’s skills from a tiny bottle of medicine, Liu Xi da-ge’s insight is truly vicious.” Jia Lie Ao smiled with a hint of flattery.

“It is merely one of the basic skills of an alchemist.” Having been called Liu Xi with so much flattery, the white clothed youth modestly shook his head; however an obscure pleased look floated upon his face which did not manage to escape the observation of the old wily foxes seated around him.

“Although the Return of Spring Powder loses out to the Blood Clotting Medicine in terms of quality, the difference between the two isn’t dramatic. The main reason why our marketplaces are losing popularity is because previously we had raised the price too much. After we reevaluate our prices our popularity will slowly return, but lowering it back to its previous cost will be challenging. After all this Blood Clot Medicine will

definitely pull away many customers. It seems that in the future, the Xiao Clan will also gain a foothold in the healing medication market of Wu Tang City.” Jia Lie Bi slowly muttered.

“Reevaluate the prices?” At these words, Liu Mu wrinkled his brows, evidently unwilling to cope with any sudden price reduction since he had already gotten used to the high prices.

Having seen the look on Liu Mu’s face, Jia Lie Bi inwardly cursed at how brainless Liu Mu was before obligingly explaining with a smile on his face: “Mr. Liu Mu, the current market situation is unlike before. Previously, we monopolized the healing medicine market in Wu Tang City but now, that is no longer so; thus we need to reduce our prices to regain our popularity.”

Liu Mu grudgingly shook his head, curling his lip, he said: “Do whatever you want, but remember, even if you reduce the price, I still get the cut we talked about when the medicine was worth 300 gold.”

Jia Lie Bi’s eyes couldn’t help but twitch as a cloud of anger began to descend upon his mind; he took a deep breath to calm down. His face still wore a smiling expression, however it seems to have grown a little colder: “Haha, of course. I will definitely pay Liu Mu’s share as we agreed.”

“Ok.” A satisfied look on his face, Liu Mu nodded his head and once again returned to his seat. Even more unbridled than before, he dragged the pretty maid onto his lap.

“Mr. Liu Mu, we do not have much ‘Return of Spring Powder’ left. Earlier, I have already sent people to the Primer Auction House to purchase ingredients. When the time comes, I’m afraid I’ll have to inconvenience you again,” Jia Lie Bi smiled before supplementing: “Additionally, I managed to buy a pair of valuable Ta Ge Er Desert Snake Women yesterday and I have already sent them to your room.”

When Liu Mu heard that he had to refine medicine again, a look of impatience flashed clearly across his face, yet after hearing the two words: Snake Women, the impatience immediately changed into a perverted expression. With the flame of lust burning in his eyes, he nodded his head

and took charge of the situation: “As long as there is enough medicine ingredients, the Clan Leader need not worry about the quantity of Return of Spring Powder.”

At the sight of a Liu Mu who was so easy to control, the corners of Jia Lie Bi’s mouth turned to form an expression of disdain, inwardly he sneered: “With only thoughts controlled by lust, besides knowing alchemy, he has no other good points.”

Jia Lie Bi sneered as he shook his head, lifting his teacup with both hands to his mouth to take a sip before engaging in the topic Liu Mu was most interested in: sexual affairs, smiling all the while.

As he was once again making light talk with Liu Mu, a clan member hastily barged into the hall, quickly arriving at Jia Lie Bi’s side before lowering his head to speak some words into Jia Lie Bi’s ear in a hushed tone.

With a smile on his face, Jia Lie Bi listened to the clan member’s report, a moment later, the smile on his face went rigid, “Ka Cha” the teacup in his hand was suddenly crushed to dust and the dust and tea mixed together as they flowed down his hand, dripping onto the floor.

“That wretched Primer Auction House, to actually use such a ploy with me!”

With a face full of fury, Jia Lie Bi abruptly stood up and roared in anger, a berserk Qi suddenly exploded out of his body forming tiny whirlwinds which hissed in mid air.

Seated closest to Jia Lie Bi, Jia Lie Ao suddenly found it hard to breathe due to the imposing Qi that emitted from his father and hastily rushing a few steps back. He anxiously shouted: “Father!”

Jia Lie Ao’s shout allowed Jia Lie Bi to regain his senses. His face slightly twitched before coldly sitting down and saying: “Primer Auction House has refused to sell our Jia Lie Clan any more medicine ingredients!”

Once these words were said, the entire hall was in uproar, everyone looked at each other in dismay, alarm was visible on their faces.

“How can it be possible? Hasn’t Primer Auction House always preserved their neutrality? How can they suddenly choose to oppose the Jia Lie Clan?” Jia Lie Ku’s complexion changed at Jia Lie Bi’s words and shuddered while involuntarily voicing his thoughts.

“If there were enough incentive, who would pointlessly maintain their neutrality?” Jia Lie Bi coldly snorted in reply as he slowly spit out a sigh. He cast a glance towards the Liu Xi who was in a sorry state due to his Qi before icily saying: “I fear that the Xiao Clan had some hand in this matter.”

“They shouldn’t have the ability to cause Primer Auction House to refuse to sell us medicine ingredients right?” Jia Lie Ao muttered.

“Humph, who knows what kind of conditions they used to move Primer Auction House.” Jia Lie Bi stroked his aged face and without knowing why, a sense of unease filled his heart.

“What can we do now? Without enough medical ingredients, our stock of the Return of Spring Powder will quickly run out. At that time, it would be our turn to experience the spectacle of an empty marketplace.” Jia Lie Ku anxiously said.

Jia Lie Bi ground his teeth and coldly replied: “There are quite a few medical ingredient stores who still stand by our side, first send people to buy all of the medical ingredients they have to support ourselves as much as possible over this period of time. If even then we are still unable to survive, then go to the other cities and towns to buy medical ingredients at high prices, I don’t believe that the influence of the Xiao Clan will reach the other nearby cities and towns.”

As the words left his mouth, Jia Lie Bi took another teacup only to realise that his hands were lightly trembling. Swallowing a mouthful of saliva, Jia Lie Bi had an inexplicable feeling that the Jia Lie Clan had stirred up something that should never have been touched.....

Chapter 81: Detection

The appearance of the Blood Clotting Powder, like a thunderbolt, swiftly ate up over half of the market share for healing medication and allowed the Xiao Clan's marketplaces to not only recover their popularity, but to surpass it within two days.

Two days after the debut of the "Blood Clotting Powder", the Jia Lie Clan had gradually reduced the price of the "Return the Spring Powder" back to what it was initially. However, the profiteering practice of the Jia Lie Clan just days before had repulsed many mercenaries, resulting in their marketplaces failing to return to the bustling places they once were.

Since Wu Tang City was close to the edge of the Magical Beast Mountain Range, the scale of mercenaries the city needed was very large. Moreover, the Magical Beast Mountain Range was filled with danger, stimulating an extremely great demand for healing medicine. Hence, despite the Xiao Clan snatching over half the market share for healing medicine, the Jia Lie Clan continued to remain profitable. Yet, when compared to the past, the profit has shrunk to half of what it was...

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The furious sales of the healing medicine had far outstripped the expectations of the Xiao Clan which was venturing into this profession for the very first time. Every day, the market's "Blood Clotting Powder" would be quickly purchased in the morning by the mercenaries who had been waiting beforehand. By the afternoon, all of the healing medicine would have been sold out. At this time, the mercenaries who had failed to buy any "Blood Clotting Powder" had little choice but to go to the Jie Lie Clan's marketplace to purchase the slightly inferior "Return of Spring Powder."

With the indirect help from the overwhelming demand of healing medicine from the mercenaries, the Jia Lie Clan barely managed to survive the fierce retaliation of the Xiao Clan. However, their respective futures would ultimately hinge on who had a greater stock of medicine.

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Sitting in the Meeting Room, Xiao Yan helplessly watched Xiao Zhan, who could not stop grinning. Shifting his gaze slightly, he found that the three elders were also full of smiles. Silly laughter also continuously penetrated the hall. The cause of all of this was the stock of “Blood Clotting Powder” that Xiao Yan had delivered that morning under the disguise of the black robed man.

“Ha Ha! The sales of the “Blood Clotting Powder” was simply too crazy. Had the esteemed elder not delivered another batch, I’m afraid that our warehouse would be empty by now.” Xiao Zhan smiled as he held a green bottle with both hands in a manner that suggested he was holding a treasure.

“True. In only a few days, our marketplace’s popularity had more than doubled what it was at our peak. The losses we previously suffered have slowly been recovered. Hehe, adding the sales from the healing medicine... The profit from the last few days already amounts to about two months of our previous income.” The usually quiet first elder was unable to control himself and became talkative in the face of such a huge gain; the wrinkles on his aged face were like a blooming chrysanthemum.

Xiao Zhan smiled and nodded. Turning his head to face the seated and slightly bored Xiao Yan, he could not help but reprimand: “You little rascal, you always disappear when the esteemed elder is here. Why can’t you be less active and stay put at home?”

Being wrongfully scolded, Xiao Yan rolled his eyes while helplessly thinking, “If I did not move around, where would you get the healing medicine from?”

“Ai, the esteemed elder is too generous. Luckily, I managed to inquire about the ingredients needed. Moving forward, we will be responsible for the ingredients. The Xiao Clan has already obtained so much from him. If we are too greedy, I’m afraid that it will do us more harm than good.” Xiao Zhan muttered as he took out a piece of paper from his pocket.

“Yes.” The three elders quickly nodded at Xiao Zhan’s words. Had Xiao Zhan not been meticulous, they would have forgotten about this matter.

"Heh. Knowing where to draw the line in the face of such a large profit.. not bad. It's little wonder why your father could become the head of a clan." Yao Lao's praise was heard in Xiao Yan's heart.

Nodding his head and smiling, Xiao Yan gained some peace of mind. Although he could temporarily help the Xiao Clan materially, the ultimate success of the clan depended upon the leader's ability. If the leader was someone with horrible character, regardless of how great Xiao Yan's ability was, he could not help the useless succeed. Yet, from the looks of things, it seemed that Xiao Zhan was capable of being a great leader.

"Clan Leader, elders, Miss Ya Fei from the Primer Auction House is waiting outside," A clan member hurried into the hall and spoke just as Xiao Yan was praising his father.

"Ya Fei?" Hearing the clan member's words, Xiao Zhan was silent for a moment before hastily speaking: "Quickly, invite her in."

Not long after the clan member went to relay the order, a graceful and lovely woman slowly appeared in their field of vision. Her mumbling laughter also began spreading and lingering in the hall. "Ha Ha. Clan Leader Xiao seems to take pride in his Clan's recent success . "

Leaning his head back on the cold chair, Xiao Yan turned his gaze towards the main entrance and was slightly stunned as his eyes were filled with a breathtaking sight.

Beside the main entrance stood a smiling, mature woman wrapped in a red robe. The tight, red dress thoroughly hugged her exquisite body. Her curvy waist swayed so radiantly and gracefully from side to side that it caused others to covet it. From the bottom of the dress came a straight cut that came upwards to her thigh, both revealing and hiding her dazzling leg beneath.

"Vixen..." Watching the aura of matureness that the lady instantly emits, the young, middle-aged and three elderly men in the hall involuntarily voiced their misgivings.

"Ahem." Coughing dryly, Xiao Zhan smilingly stood up and began with the pleasantries: "Ya Fei Xiao-Jie, the Xiao Clan's annual profit cannot

compare with even a branch of your Primer Auction House. What right do we have to be pleased?"

"Ke Ke. Clan Leader Xiao is really eloquent. Recently, the popularity of the Xiao marketplace has far surpassed that of our auction house. This truth is something all of us have witnessed with our own eyes." Ya Fei faced the three elders in the hall and greeted them respectfully. Blinking her bright eyes, her gaze slowly shifted to Xiao Yan, only to be shocked. In a slightly stunned voice, she said, "Looking at young master Xiao current state, it seems he is stronger than when I last saw him."

"Ya Fei Xiao-Jie , please drop the honorifics and simply address me by my name. This young master is frightened of hearing them." Xiao Yan gave a seemingly pure smile as he spoke. The form of address has caused him great uneasiness.

Hearing this, Ya Fei could not help but smile.

"Is there a matter that brings you to the Xiao Clan?" Asked Xiao Zhan with a smile.

Ya Fei nodded while smiling. She sat down on the empty chair beside Xiao Yan, licked her red lips and cut to the chase. "Clan Leader Xiao, Primer Auction House has stopped supplying the Jia Lie Clan with their medicinal ingredients."

Once these words were out, a significant amount of tea from Xiao Zhan's cup was spilled onto the table. His pupils secretly skipped over his extreme happiness as he wiped off the tea, leaving no evidence. Shifting his gaze to the three elders, the radiance in their eyes was also apparent.

The big hall slowly became silent. Xiao Zhan emptied the tea in his tea cup in one gulp before asking hesitantly. "For what reason? Hasn't the Premier Auction House always adopted a neutral position?

Ya Fei smiled without answering.

Clenching his teeth, Xiao Zhan asked softly: "What price do you expect us to pay for this?"

"Nothing," Ya Fei continued to smile as she spoke.

“Eh?” Being surprised once again, Xiao Zhan watched the smiling Ya Fei doubtfully. He did not believe that the Primer Auction House would help them hurt Jie Lie Clan without a price. Touching his chin, Xiao Zhan abruptly moved. In a whisper, he sounded her out: “Is... this that esteemed elder’s doing?”

Licking her red lips, Yan Fei nodded slightly and replied with a grin: “The esteemed elder has already paid our reward, so there isn’t any need for Clan Leader Xiao to worry that we will demand something from the Xiao Clan. From now on, we are fighting alongside each other.”

Hearing this, his face finally displayed extreme happiness as he faced upwards and laughed. His laughter sent faint tremors throughout the clan.

Gradually restraining his laughter, Xiao Zhan suddenly realized that his behavior suggested that his head was overwhelmed by success. He lowered his head and realized that three elders were curling their mouths in helplessness.

Smiling embarrassingly, Xiao Zhan watched Xiao Yan who was covering his mouth and secretly laughing. He could not refrain from flying off the handle and scolding, “Little rascal, why are you laughing? Where are your manners? Go and serve tea to Ya Fei Xiao.”

(ED. < Xiao is an honorific >)

Rolling his eyes helplessly, Xiao Yan reached over to the table beside him and picked up a cup of warm tea and rushed over to serve Ya Fei with both hands.

Giving Xiao Yan a gentle smile, Ya Fei received the cup of tea from Xiao Yan. Abruptly, her pretty face changed. The pair of beautiful eyes focused on Xiao Yan’s pair of fair hands.. or rather, the black ring on his right hand.

Following Ya Fei’s line of sight, Xiao Yan’s gaze slightly froze. Without leaving any trace of avoidance, he retrieved his hands. With his back facing his father and the others, he squinted his eyes and stared at the beautiful lady before him.

Being openly stared at, Ya Fei's heart slightly tightened. Following which, she sensibly lowered her head and sipped her tea. The expression on her face was also well-hidden.

Seeing the beauty's obedient behavior, Xiao Yan relaxed and rubbed his nose. He lazily walked back to his seat while frowning as though he was deep in thought.

Chapter 82: Coming Clean

After making idle chat with Xiao Zhan and the others, Ya Fei decided to take her leave. Beside her, Xiao Yan, who had remained silent, displayed his duty as a host and escorted Ya Fei out under the approving gaze of Xiao Zhan.

After leaving the main entrance, Xiao Yan did not show any intention of returning home. With his hands behind his head and his eyes narrowing, he followed Ya Fei closely. No one could tell what he was pondering.

Walking beside Xiao Yan, Ya Fei became slightly anxious. Her clenched fists were already covered in perspiration. Since she was young, she had an extremely good memory and by chance, she had saw the hands of the mysterious black cloaked alchemist the last time they met at the auction house. The fair complexion and vitality appeared to be that of a young man and moreover, on the fair hand was a black ring that was exactly the same as the one worn by Xiao Yan. Having this coincidence as the starting point and thinking back on why the Xiao Clan was in the good grace of the alchemist, the key to the riddle seemed to be about to burst forth.

Biting her red lips, Ya Fei secretly measured the young man beside her from the corner of her eyes. The young man, dressed in inexpensive black clothes, had a tall and vigorous body. His hands were cupping his head, emitting a lazy feeling. While his dedicated face had the tenderness of a young man, the angle that appeared and disappeared from the corner of his mouth did not appear to belong to an inexperienced and naive young man.

Despite having carefully sized-up Xiao Yan, Ya Fei still had trouble believing that the person that forced both herself and Gu Ni into obedience at the auction house was actually a young man of about seventeen years of age.

“Seen enough?” Just as Ya Fei could not help but smile bitterly, the young man beside her finally spoke in an indifferent voice.

Slowing down her footsteps, Ya Fei sighed: “You... Should I address you

as the esteemed elder or Xiao Yan Di-di?"

TL: Di-di = younger brother

Xiao Yan raised his eyebrows before abruptly raising his chin towards one corner. "Go in."

Ya Fei followed his gaze and walked over. Her cheeks involuntarily reddened. The place where Xiao Yan had indicated was Wu Tang City's famous meeting place for lovers.

Following a brief hesitation, Ya Fei had initially wanted to weakly suggest changing the venue. However, Xiao Yan had already swaggered over and had sat down on a stone chair under a dark green willow tree.

Faced with Xiao Yan's overbearing manner that was the total opposite of his respectful manner back in the Xiao Clan, Ya Fei could only helplessly shake her head. Isn't this change in personality a little too quick?

Slowly stepping forward, Ya Fei sat face to face with Xiao Yan. A pair of long narrow beautiful eyes sparkled, gauging the young man in front of her.

"Have you recognised me?" Xiao Yan vaguely asked as he reached out to pluck a willow leaf to chew.

Ya Fei pushed her fallen hair back and her expression caused a man just a short distance away to widen his eyes. Licking her lips, she laughed bitterly: "I was actually hoping that my guess was wrong."

Hearing those words, Xiao Yan's eyes narrowed and his teeth ruthlessly bit at the bitter leaf.

"You are not intending to kill me, are you?" Seeing Xiao Yan's attitude, Ya Fei momentarily asked in a timid voice. Nonetheless, a brief smile flashed in her eyes.

"I intend to do much more and then dispose of your corpse," Said Xiao Yan evilly.

Hearing such crude and inappropriate words, Ya Fei's face reddened, her coquettish eyes stared at him and scolded: "Where has this child learned

to pick up such bad things?"

Xiao Yan curled his lips and stretched lazily. Since his identity was already revealed, there was no longer a need to beat around the bush. "The black cloaked man who had done business with you was indeed me."

"But the one who makes the medicine is a different person, right?" Ya Fei laughed as her gaze wandered around. She was not stupid. The extent of Xiao Yan's ability was something that she was very certain of. Even if he was an alchemist, with his current strength, it was impossible for him to refine high quality medicine like the Qi Gathering Pill.

"If a lady is too smart, no man will like her." Xiao Yan curled his lips and said as he glanced at Ya Fei, who had already correctly guessed most of the truth.

"That is just the thinking of some vulgar men," Ya Fei raised her eyebrow and said disdainfully.

Xiao Yan rolled his eyes. He did not have the time to discuss such unimportant matters. Chewing the bitter leaf that had spread in his mouth, Xiao Yan indifferently said: "You should know the reason I have come to find you. Please do your utmost to keep my identity a secret. This will be to the benefit of everyone."

Licking his lips, Xiao Yan threw a glance at the lovely beauty in front of him: "Naturally, do not treat this as something you can threaten me with. Otherwise, you will lose more than you will gain."

"Do I look like a brainless, large woman?" Ya Fei innocently opened her hands.

Xiao Yan watched the surging billow on her chest seriously for a while before nodding his head. "They are indeed very large. As for whether you have brains, it will depend on your behavior from now on."

"....."

Being taken advantage of by a young man a few years younger than her, Ya Fei shook her head, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. Even if his double identity was put aside, with just his handsome appearance alone, it

was difficult to arouse anyone's ill will.

"What about our collaboration?" Ya Fei anxiously stared at Xiao Yan. This was the question that she really wanted to ask.

"There will be no change. You will continue to refuse supplying the Jia Lie clan any medicinal ingredients and I will pay you with five Qi Gathering Pills." Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders. His indifferent voice allowed Ya Fei to heave a sigh of relief.

"Haha, I look forward to working with you." Ya Fei said with a beautiful smile as she extended her hand in a natural and generous manner.

Lazily nodding his head, Xiao Yan shook the delicate hand. Contrary to Ya Fei's expectations, only a brief contact was made.

Looking at the young man whose actions were unpredictable, Ya Fei sighed uncontrollably: "It really causes one to suspect whether you are really only seventeen. I've only realized now that you have been leading me by the nose."

Disregarding such a topic, Xiao Yan waved his hand. He stood up and began leaving. As he walked he said: "When we meet again, you should use the same attitude as before lest anyone should find something amiss."

Nodding with a smile, Ya Fei softly said: "If you have time, could you invite the alchemist behind you to the Primer Auction house? He will always be welcomed."

Slowing his footsteps, Xiao Yan rubbed his nose and vaguely replied: "We will consider it when we have time." After turning around and waving once more, Xiao Yan left decisively.

Watching as the young man's figure disappeared into the distance while standing on the same spot, Ya Fei smiled bitterly and shook her head. In a low voice, she said: "What a little devil. I cannot understand why the girl from the Na Lan clan would cancel her engagement with him. In the future, I'm afraid that Na Lan Su will vomit blood in regret."

Chapter 83: Young Head of the Marketplace

Less than a month after the release of the Blood Clotting Powder, the Xiao Clan won seventy percent of Wu Tang City's healing medicine market. The huge profit filled the Xiao Clan with joy. The courtyard and doorway, which were rarely used recently, were now used constantly and were now as lively as a market.

Compared to the Xiao Clan, the Jia Lie Clan was filled with gloominess. Due to their recent profiteering ways, they had aroused the dislike of the majority of the mercenaries. Moreover, the Xiao Clan's Blood Clotting Powder was more potent than the Return the Spring Powder. Hence, the Jia Lie Clan's healing medicine business continued to be suppressed by the Xiao Clan's business. Had it not been for the Xiao Clan's daily limit on the sale of their healing medicine, the Jia Lie Clan would not have had any business at all.

While their market share in the healing medicine industry had shrunk, there was still a tidy profit to be made. The main headache for the Jia Lie Clan lied in the large amount of medical ingredients needed for them to make their medicines.

The largest resource warehouse in the city, the Primer Auction House, had already rejected having any further cooperation with them. Facing this embargo on medical ingredients, the Jia Lie Clan was filled with fury. Despite their anger, however, they did not dare use any force against the Primer Auction House. Supporting the Primer Auction House was a force that could rank amongst the most powerful of the entire Jia Ma Empire. A small family clan in Wu Tang City like them did not have the ability to provoke them.

Unable to procure goods from the Auction House, the desperate Jia Lie Clan could only purchase all the stocks of the medical ingredients shops in Wu Tang City at a price several times higher than their market value. Nevertheless, this was only a temporary measure. The medical ingredient

shops did not have the ability to meet such a large demand in the long-term.

More importantly, everyone in Wu Tang City had recognized the anger and killing intent between the Xiao Clan and Jia Lie clan. Helping the Jia Lie clan now would undoubtedly offend the Xiao clan, which was getting stronger each day. Therefore, after their first sales of medicinal ingredients to the Jia Lie Clan, many medicine shops did not dare to sell to them in bulk again. This restriction had also worsened the predicament of the Jia Lie Clan.

With this, the Jia Lie Clan's source of medicinal ingredients from Wu Tang City was cut by nearly eighty percent. The remaining sources were far too insufficient to meet the demand from the manufacturing of their healing medicine. Due to this, the utterly helpless Jia Lie Clan could only use high prices to purchase medicinal ingredients from other cities, barely managing to overcome the crisis caused by the shortage of medicinal ingredients. By doing this, however, the Jia Lie Clan's profit once again shrank. If it was not for the profit from the healing medicine, the Jia Lie Clan would have faced bankruptcy already.

Currently in Wu Tang City, the Xiao clan's position was rising with the help from their healing medicine and was even faintly showing the momentum to surpass the other two large clans.

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Xiao Yan was sluggishly walking on a street within the rowdy marketplace. Behind him, seven to eight tall and sturdy, large men were adorned with the Xiao Clan's guard uniform. On all of the chests of these large men, there would be four or more golden stars. Clearly, all of these large men had the strength of at least a four star Dou Zhe.

On the street where the flow of people was rather large, many fierce and tough mercenaries that were emitting the scent of blood all gave a friendly smile upon seeing a young man walking lazily with his hands behind his head. Occasionally, those who were more familiar would laughingly ask: "Young head, have you come to patrol the marketplace again?"

Each time he was faced with such a form of address, Xiao Yan would helplessly pull his mouth before letting out a soft sigh. Half a month ago, Xiao Zhan had suddenly placed him in charge of this marketplace in the name of training him. Regarding Xiao Zhan's action, the Xiao Clan had an argument. Having someone manage a marketplace in his teens was unheard of in the Xiao Clan. However, after considering Xiao Yan's much elevated position in the clan, some eventually agreed. Thus, Xiao Yan, who was originally resting at home, was placed in charge of this marketplace.

Although the marketplace was huge, the management of it was not very tiring. Which was something that comforted Xiao Yan. Xiao Yan threw the miscellaneous matters regarding the division of the streets and the discussion of the rental rates of the shops in the prime locations to the old housekeeper that his father had specially assigned to him. Each day, he would occasionally bring a group of large men to patrol the streets and manage the security issues of the marketplace, spending his days in a calm, yet unrestrained manner.

On the surface, Xiao Yan appeared to be mild and indifferent. However, he loved to gather with the mercenaries and discuss the stimulating and dangerous experiences they had during missions, the strange monsters and the Qi Methods that are left behind in caves. These discussions increased Xiao Yan's thirst for risk-taking and adventure. He desired to enter those remote mountains that had almost no traces of people to search for those secretive, yet strong Dou Techniques and Qi Methods.

Xiao Yan's young age and his delicate face already made it difficult for others to have ill feelings. On top of this, each time the discussion became exciting, he would retrieve the limited healing medicine from his breast pocket and pass them around for free. This caused those straightforward mercenaries to have a good impression of him. Over time, the marketplace managed by Xiao Yan had the highest number of customers returning amongst the Xiao Clan's marketplaces.

Recalling the events over the last half a month, Xiao Yan emotionally smiled. Such days were numbered. At most, after another half a month, he would have to leave with Yao Lao on a training journey and it would be at

least another one or two years before he would return.

Throwing away his melancholy, Xiao Yan raised his head. A wretched and skinny image from the crowd came rushing at him abruptly.

Pausing his steps and looking at the ordinarily dressed small man, Xiao Yan's eyebrows creased as he spoke indifferently: "Ke Lu, why are you here instead of being out there making your fortune?"

The dreadful looking small man, Ke Lu, in front of him was the marketplace's well known pickpocket, gold finger. When faced with this kind of shady occupation, Xiao Yan did not unrealistically attempt to eliminate them. He knew only too well that if there is a front side, there will be a back side. Although such an occupation is looked down upon, they are extremely well informed. Regardless of whatever happened anywhere in Wu Tan City, they would have some information on it.

"Hehe, young master," Facing Xiao Yan with a flattering smile, the skinny small man called Ke Lu said with a smile: "This lowly person is here to inform you that I have information from my subordinate saying that Xun Er Xiao-jie was verbally insulted by a man of unknown origin just outside the marketplace. I came here after hearing about it."

"Oh right, Jia Lie Ao of the Jia Lie clan was also amongst present. It seems like he is acquainted with the man wearing funeral clothes and talking to Xun Er Xiao-Jie. Quite a few people were also accompanying them."

Narrowing his eyes, Xiao Yan indifferent face gradually became cold. Slightly slanting his head, he softly said: "Xiao Li, call the others. As long as they are alive, they need to be here."

"Understood!" A large man respectfully replied before hurriedly turning around and running towards the interior of the marketplace.

"Lead the way," Said Xiao Yan indifferently as he turned around and raised his chin.

Looking at the sudden coldness on Xiao Yan's face, Ke Lu hurriedly nodded. Not daring to utter any unnecessary words, he immediately began

leading the way.

“This bastard dares to come to the Xiao Clan’s territory to molest a member of the Xiao Clan. If I, Xiao Yan, allow you to leave the marketplace unharmed, I will abandon my post as the head of the marketplace!” Licking his lips, Xiao Yan’s ghastly voice caused Ke Lu, who was at the front leading the way, to tremble and pick up his pace.

Chapter 84: To Cripple

Liu Xi was currently very excited. The source of his excitement was the pretty lady clad in green standing a short distance away.

The young lady's clothes were elegant and her exquisite small face was devoid of any cosmetics, displaying an image of natural beauty and innocence. Her sleek black hair, which was randomly restricted by a short green cloth, gathered at her waist. When the wind blew, her drifting hair stirred one's heart.

On the young lady's unbearably small waist that one felt compelled to hug, a pale purple belt thoroughly outlined her graceful curves in a manner that even the eyes of a passerby could not help but peep at her waist. In his heart, Liu Xi secretly thought: 'If I could embrace such a small waist, how enjoyable would it be?'

As his red-hot face watched the young lady, Liu Xi's palms trembled due to excitement. The graceful young lady in front of him was totally different from all the others that he has had fun with. Adding her refined temperament, which was much like a lotus flower, the lustrous Liu Xi could not help but feel the desire to immediately have her.

Glancing at Xiao Ning who had just been driven to the ground with one strike, Liu Xi laughed, "Protecting ladies requires real ability which you do not have."

Xiao Ning's face turned red and furiously clenched his teeth angrily as he was mocked by Liu Xi.

"Xiao Ning, come back. You are no match for him," Xiao Yu softly hooted as she stepped forward. Her face was slightly icy.

Xiao Ning clenched his teeth. He weighed both sides' strength in his mind and could only unwillingly retreat. Having lost face in front of the girl he liked, Xiao Ning was utterly embarrassed.

After scanning Xiao Yu's body with his eyes, Liu Xi's gaze finally landed on her sexy and long legs and felt compelled to praise her, "Another lady

of the highest grade. It seems my luck is quite good today.”

“Haha, Liu Xi Da-ge, they are members of the Xiao Clan. This woman’s name is Xiao Yu. Her temper is short and men without some ability would not be able to conquer her.” Jia Lie Ao, who was accompanied by a group of burly large men, walked forward with a smile and laughed dreadfully.

TL: Da Ge – big brother

“Keke, the spicier ... the more delectable.” Liu Xi gaze once again turned to the silent young lady clad in green, his eyes released a greenish light. “Who is this lady?”

Seeing that his beloved person had caught the attention of Liu Xi, Jia Lie Ao’s mouth twitched slightly. He silently but ferociously cursed this bastard with worms in his head and in his heart before helplessly replied. “She is Xiao Xun Er.”

“A good name.” Laughing while nodding his head, Liu Xi stopped wasting his breath on Jia Lie Ao. He took two steps forward and acted like a gentleman as he spoke, “My name is Liu Xi. May I invite you ladies to join me in looking around the marketplace? Haha, if there is anything in the marketplace that you ladies are interested in, feel free to put it on my tab.” As he spoke, Liu Xi’s arms slowly widened, boastfully exposing the badge on his chest that revealed his occupation.

On the badge was a simple medicinal cauldron. On the surface of the medicinal cauldron was a silver ripple that reflected a peculiar radiance upon receiving the rays of the sun.

“A first tier alchemist?” Seeing the badge on Liu Xi’s chest, the surrounding crowd of people immediately choked; Liu Xi’s smile widened at these choked voices.

Hearing the words “first tier alchemist”, Xiao Yu’s face slightly changed. However, with her personality, she would not go shopping with a shifty-eyed person simply because of his occupation. Without pausing, she spoke: “We’re not free. You can find someone else.” After she spoke, she grabbed Xun Er’s hands and turned around to leave.

Just as she was turning around, a few large men stepped out from the crowd of people. They smiled licentiously as they blocked the way out.

Seeing the large men blocking their path, Xiao Yu's face sunk. She turned around and spoke coldly to Jia Lie Ao. "This is the Xiao Clan's territory. Aren't you being a little too arrogant?"

"Keke, the Xiao Clan? Are they very strong? All they did was gain a little popularity with the help of the Blood Clotting Powder. If I wished to, I could easily destroy the Xiao Clan. The Spring Reviving Powder is but a healing medicine that I randomly made." Liu Xi stroked his snow white sleeves as he said proudly.

Hearing these words, Xiao Yu became furious, but she remained quiet. Deep in her heart, she knew the ability of an alchemist and did not dare to speak too bristly to avoid bringing any unnecessary trouble to the Xiao Clan.

Although Xiao Yu may care about such details, Xun Er was not concerned with such worries. She now understood that this human shaped garbage was delaying her meeting with Xiao Yan.

Lightly raising her eyes and watching the arrogant Liu Xi, Xun Er's small lips opened slightly. The words that her ethereal voice spoke, however, caused everyone to be in a daze. "Garbage will always be garbage. Even after wearing the skin of an alchemist, he will still be garbage. Someone like you who goes around flaunting your little bit of ability.. using Xiao Yan Ge-ge's words..stupid."

The street became quiet. Many people were stunned. The young lady who appeared so elegant was as good as anyone else when it came to scolding people.

Xiao Yu was similarly stunned while watching the Xun Er beside her. A long while later, she helplessly curled her lips and said, "I have said that you would be corrupted by that little bastard..."

Having been publicly ridiculed in an unrestrained manner by Xun Er, the smile on the narrow minded Liu Xi's face diminished. He said gloomily, "In all these years, you are the first person who dared speak to me in such

a manner."

"Really. What foolish words."

As her small hands rubbed her bright and clean forehead, Xun Er was now almost certain that the person in front of her was either an idiot or was overly arrogant.

"Jia Lie Ao, do it! Originally, I wanted to use legitimate means. It's too bad that she is ungrateful." The gloomy faced Liu Xi waved his hand and ordered coldly.

"Eh..." Jia Lie Ao was startled. He rubbed his head while suffering a headache. With a wary smile, he thought, "What is this guy thinking? Father was right. Other than alchemy, he knows nothing. How can such a person be an alchemist?"

Sighing, Jia Lie Ao could only say with a smile, "Liu Xi Da-ge, currently our Jia Lie clan cannot afford to offend the Xiao clan."

"The Xiao Clan?" Laughing coldly, Liu Xi said disdainfully, "If I can have her, I will help you ruin the Xiao Clan. Besides the Return of Spring Powder, I am able to make two to three other types of medication. Once I refine them, I assure you that the Xiao Clan will return to the sorry state it was in before."

Listening to the assurance, Jia Lie Ao was once again stunned. He had not expected that this person would so easily reveal all the cards in his hands. Besides being secretly delighted, he once again sighed. Does this mean that the greater the stupidity, the greater the probability of one becoming an alchemist? Jia Lie Ao waved his hand and ordered, "Capture them!"

Hearing Jia Lie Ao orders, over ten huge men behind him immediately wore fierce and tough faces as they approached and surrounded Xun Yan Er's group.

Seeing the arrogance of the other party, Xiao Yu became extremely furious. Accompanied by a sneer, Xiao Yu retrieved a long green whip from her waist and mercilessly whipped the bulky man that was rushing

towards her. “Pa”. In the blink of an eye, a long bloodstain appeared on the man’s face.

Although Xiao Yu was a three star Dou Zhe, against over ten people with strength similar to a Dou Zhe, she fell into a disadvantaged position after beating off two to three of the big men. She ended up being forced to dodge causing her to be embarrassed.

After causing another big man to cough up blood and retreat, a pale faced Xiao Yu was forced to take a few steps back. Turning her head, she ordered Xiao Ning, “Take Xun Er away. Go and call that rascal here!”

Xiao Ning hurriedly nodded. His face abruptly changed as he quickly warned, “Sister, be careful!”

Hearing Xiao Ning’s warning, Xiao Yu swiftly turned around and found the man whom she had whipped earlier raising his iron fist sinisterly and then viciously threw a punch towards her chest.

Seeing such an unexpected and dirty attack that focused on such a position on a woman’s body, Xiao Yu was livid with rage; Dou Qi gathered on her palm. Just as it was about to be furiously released, a black figure speedily appeared by her side. A fierce wind smashed into the huge man. The enormous strength directly caused the man to roll a couple of meters with his face covered in blood before gradually stopping.

“Cripple everyone who attacked.”

A young man carrying a steel rod glanced coldly at Liu Xi and Jia Lie Ao standing on the other side. The soft sound emitted by his lips was a little frightening.

Hearing the young man’s command, tens of huge men carrying the same steel rod and wearing evil smiles came charging out at once.

Chapter 85: Acceptance

Facing dozens of four star Dou Zhe level practitioners wielding steel rods, the squad of over ten people that had been flaunting their power suddenly froze. Before they had the chance to escape, those black metal rods ruthlessly rained down on every part of their bodies. In an instant, horrible shrills echoed through the entire street.

After throwing a cold glance at the ashen faced Jia Lie Ao, Xiao Yan tilted his head and faced the furious, red-faced Xiao Yu and asked in a gentle voice: “Are you alright? You should have informed me that you were coming over. Recently, this bunch of bastards from the Jia Lie Clan have been looking to stir up some trouble.”

Being suddenly treated so gently by Xiao Yan for the first time, Xiao Yu was obviously shocked. The redness on her face grew a shade darker. At a loss, she randomly shifted her gaze and spoke: “I met Xun Er when I left the house. She said that she wanted to come and see you so I decided to accompany her. How was I supposed to know that I would encounter these bastards?”

Xiao Yan couldn’t help but shake his head. He shifted his gaze to the young lady clad in green, whose face was full of joy at his appearance. The smile on his face became even gentler: “You seemed to enjoy cursing just now.”

Listening to Xiao Yan making fun of her, Xun Er innocently shook her head, pursing her lips and saying with a bright smile: “That wasn’t my intention. It was just that I didn’t like his attitude – Even Xiao Yan ge-ge back then didn’t dare to openly snatch someone off the street.”

Facing Xun Er’s hidden rebuttal, Xiao Yan touched his nose and smiled forcefully. He might have been a little arrogant back then, but he could not be as bad as the man in front of him.

“Oh, isn’t this the young master of the Xiao Clan? Having not seen you for over a year, I heard that you have finally gotten rid your name, ‘cripple’!” Jia Lie Ao couldn’t help but butt in after seeing Xiao Yan speak

to Xun Er.

“Who is he?” Liu Xi’s gaze was equally cold. Seeing Xun Er chatting and laughing with another man after giving him the cold shoulder was a great blow to the arrogant Liu Xi’s ego. he could not accept this.

“Hehe, Liu Xi Da-ge, this is the Xiao clan’s famous “genius”. His name is Xiao Yan. Back then, despite training for over ten years, his Dou Qi remained at only the third or fourth stage. I don’t know what he ate recently, but his Dou Qi rose quickly to the eighth stage within a few months.” Jia Lie Ao stood beside Lu Xi and made the introduction with a cold smile.

“Regardless of how great one’s talent is, if one isn’t even a Dou Zhe, he is nothing but trash,” Said Liu Xi coldly

Hearing these words, Xun Er’s small face grew even icier. A golden flame flashed in her limpid eyes.

Reaching out his hand and lightly patting on Xun Er’s stretched, taut body, Xiao Yan smiled indifferently and shook his head. Turning his head, Xiao Yan glanced at Liu Xi who was completely dressed in white. His gaze randomly swept towards his chest where the Alchemist badge resided and smiled: “You should be the alchemist who refined the potion ‘Return of Spring Powder’, right?”

Lu Xi coldly smiled and stuck out his chest with the badge, proudly announcing: “That’s right! I am the alchemist hired by the Jia Lie Clan.”

Xiao Yan, seemingly having realised something, nodded and laughed, “No wonder. Only an alchemist like you could refine such a low grade healing medicine. You really have been worthy of your master’s teaching!”

Upon hearing Xiao Yan’s words, the surrounding mercenaries promptly laughed loudly. After having experienced the profiteering ways of the Jia Lie Clan, these mercenaries held a significant grudge against the creator of the “Return of Spring Powder”. Seeing that Xiao Yan dared mock the creator in his face, they felt a little satisfied.

The laughter of those around him resulted in Liu Xi’s face gradually

growing darker. His eyes coldly stared at Xiao Yan: "You are helping your Xiao Clan offend someone they cannot afford to offend."

Hearing this, Xiao Yan was a little stunned. He laughed bitterly and massaged his head, utterly speechless at how arrogant the man was. Did he really think he was some disciple of a Dou Di? A one star alchemist would be respected by the Xiao Clan but to say that he was someone the clan couldn't afford to offend, that would be a joke.

TL: Dou Di is the highest Dou Rank

"Ai, how did he become an alchemist with such low intelligence?" Sighing and shaking his head, Xiao Yan, who was a little depressed, exchanged a glance with Xun Er. After having a brief conversation with Liu Xi, he finally understood why the gentle and soft Xun Er would dislike this man so much.

Rubbing his palm gently on his face, Xiao Yan was too lazy to continue conversing with this obviously stupid person. Waving his hand at the dozen of large men behind him, he smiled, "Attack! Go after their master too. Since these people dared to create trouble in our territory, we do not need to give them any face. Otherwise, we may be laughed at."

Seeing Xiao Yan's actions, Jia Lie Ao's faced changed. He did not expect Xiao Yan would really attack. Turning his eyes, he insultingly provoked: "I thought that you had grown quite a bit. To think that you are still a useless person who only knows how to rely on his subordinates."

"Your provocations really are rather weak." Xiao Yan waved the metal rod in his hand as he spoke quietly.

"If you wish to treat it as a provocation, then consider it one. A useless person like you doesn't have the qualification to walk beside Xun Er Xiao-jie." Said Jia Lie Ao insultingly. A cold look stealthily flashed across his eyes as he continued with his evil design: "You should have undergone the Coming of Age Ceremony, haven't you? Heh. That means if I challenge you now, you won't have any reason to decline, right?"

"You are really shameless. Xiao Yan is only seventeen this year while you are twenty-three. You actually dare to issue such a challenge. If you wish

to play, I am willing to accompany you!" Xiao Yu rebuked Jia Lie Ao challenge. Her eyebrows straightened and she lashed out with her whip, leaving a thin white scar on the ground.

The corner of his mouth twitched slightly as Jia Lie Ao provokingly said: "You seem to have quite good luck with women. Yet another woman has come forward to stand up for you. Heh, you are but a coward who only knows how to hide behind women."

"Dammit, this white face is too cocky. Young Master, I will play with him in your place: " Watching the overbearing Jia Lie Ao, some of the surrounding mercenaries who had a better relationship with Xiao Yan howled.

Seeing that his words had stirred up such a large commotion, Jia Lie Ao's face changed. His strength was that of a three star Dou Zhe and was a little overwhelmed at offending such a large crowd.

Glancing at the expressionless Xiao Yan, Jia Lie Ao brushed his sleeves and coldly said: "Since you don't have the guts to accept the challenge, then let's forget about it. Liu Xin Da-ge, let's go. A person who did not dare to accept such a challenge doesn't deserve any respect."

Liu Xi nodded his head while wearing a shady smile. His gaze covertly landed on Xun Er for a moment before furiously glaring at Xiao Yan and threatening: "Brat, just you wait. I will have the Xiao Clan voluntarily send her over to me. Amongst all the woman who had caught my eye, there was not a single one whom I cannot get my hands on."

Xun Er indifferently glared at Liu Xi, whose face was filled with obscenity. Within her eyes, a killing intent finally emerged.

Jia Lie Ao and Lu Xi turned around but a couple of haughty large men from the Xiao Clan appeared at the entrance of the marketplace and barricaded the entrance.

"I know that you really wish to cripple me. Em, alright. Let's fulfill your wish... I accept your challenge." Just as Jia Lie Ao was about to send a signal for help, a young man's indifferent voice suddenly rang out from behind him.

Hearing this, Jia Lie Ao was first stunned before a sinister smile appeared. The corner of his mouth slowly lifted as he whispered: "It's you who seeks death. Don't blame me if anything happens."

Chapter 86: Challenge

Turning around slowly, Jia Lie Ao slanted his head, the smile on the corner of his mouth was a little sinister. "Liu Xi Da-ge, may I play around with him?"

Liu Xi nodded his head and smiled. Without leaving any trace, he straightened his palm in front of him and perversely said: "If you have the chance, don't hold back."

Jia Lie Ao smiled and shut his eyes. Liu Xi's words had abruptly prompted him to recall a secret private conversation he had with Jia Lie Bi. Back then, Jia Lie Bi had just received the news of Xiao Yan having recovered his talents. After a long silence while wearing a gloomy face, Jia Lie Bi used an extremely solemn and cold voice when he finally spoke to Jia Lie Ao.

"If that boy ever accepts your challenge you must not show any mercy. It would be best if you could kill him on the spot. Even if you are unable to, crippling him will also help the Jia Lie Clan remove a potentially terrifying enemy."

Gradually remembering the grave and chilling voice that his father used to deliver the message, the smile on Jia Lie Ao's face grew increasingly sinister. His awful eyes gazed at the calm Xiao Yan a short distance away. He felt a premonition that the young genius would be killed by his own hands.

Jia Lie Ao's confidence originated from his own strength. In addition to the position of a three star Dou Zhe, the Qi Method that he had trained with was a wind element High Xuan one, Hurricane Chant. Adding the few Dou Techniques that he knew, he was already able to be victorious in a challenge against a five star Dou Zhe.

Compared to him, even though Xiao Yan had his talent return was only 8 Duan Qi at the Coming of Age Ceremony. Even if his strength once again increased during this period, it was impossible for Xiao Yan to surpass him. Regarding this, Jia Lie Ao had absolute confidence.

Within the entire street, Jia Lie Ao was not the only one who thought that Xiao Yan had no chance of victory. Even the observing mercenaries and Xiao Yu similarly thought that regardless of how outstanding Xiao Yan's talent was, the gap in the rank of the two was not something that anyone could ignore.

"Isn't this little rascal normally overtly shrewd? Why did he fall for that guy's lowly provocation?" Seeing Xiao Yan who had a metal rod in his hand, Xiao Yu's face became bleak. Stepping forward, she cruelly scolded in order to protect Xiao Yan: "When have you become someone who doesn't know his limits? Knowing that you can't win, why did you accept the challenge? Are you tired of living?"

Receiving the spurt of reprimands from Xiao Yu, Xiao Yan merely shrugged and smiled: "We haven't even started fighting. It is difficult to say who is the one who is tired of living."

"You..." Watching the stubborn Xiao Yan, Xiao Yu savagely stomped her feet. Her sexy long legs leaped to his front, blocking him. Next, she lashed her green whip in the air and releasing a splitting sound. "Let me fight in your stead. I know your potential is great but that is something for the future."

Watching Xiao Yu whose back was facing him, Xiao Yan was stunned. He did not expect that the woman who had always fought with him would in the face of others, protect him to such an extent. He rubbed his head, unable to make heads or tails out of it. After which, he swept his gaze across Xiao Yu's back to her slender waist, her beautiful butt and finally landing on her pair of perfect and sexy long legs.

Somewhat surprised at the perfect outline of this wild woman, Xiao Yan smacked his lips and quickly retrieved his gaze before the body's owner discovered them. His head leaned forward. When viewed from a distance, he appeared to be putting his chin on Xiao Yu's shoulders. "Eh. Back then, didn't you wish for someone to beat me to death?"

The sound of breathing beside her ear lead to Xiao Yu's body instantly tense up. The delicate tip of her ear was quickly covered by a pink blush. A

moment later, she took a deep breath and spoke with indifferent voice that hid a difficult to discern shiver: "You should clearly understand the value you have to the clan. Therefore, you cannot accept any challenges as you please. As your.... Biao-jie, I have the right to protect you from some danger."

"Eh, what a strange argument." Xiao Yan could only helplessly scratch his head. "Forget it. I will settle my own problem. As a woman, you should stand aside." Finishing the sentence, he fiercely tightened his grip on the metal rod and turned his body to one side, bypassing Xiao Yu who had been blocking him. Stepping off the ground, he suddenly rushed towards the impatient Jia Lie Ao.

Watching Xiao Yan's actions, Xiao Yu became anxious. Just as she was about to knock Xiao Yan back with her long whip, a young lady's clear voice caused her to pause: "Xiao Yu Biao-jie, have faith in Xiao Yan ge ge. He is not an impetuous person. If he did not have the confidence, he would not proactively provoke another."

"Xun Er..." Turning around Xiao Yu watched the smiling Xun Er, Xiao Yu was stunned. All she could do was nod and sigh. Her hands, however, continued to grip her long whip tightly.

"Heh Heh, little bastard, I will make you regret your foolish actions today." Staring at Xiao Yan, who was rushing over armed with a metal rod, Jia Lie Ao laughed coldly. The pale green Dou Qi was quickly being embodied on his palm.

Jia Lie Ao stood on the spot without moving. His palms had suddenly changed into the shape of sharp claws. At the tip of his fingers, the green Dou Qi faintly formed 10 sharp wind nails. With a sinister laugh, he moved his hands. Together with a wind-breaking sound, he ruthlessly attacked Xiao Yan.

Feeling the faint sharp sound of ripping air, Xiao Yan narrowed his eyes. He raised his left hand and ferociously punched the ground in front of him. A shapeless strong gust of air hit the surface and its reflected force suddenly halted Xiao Yan's advance.

Seeing how flexible Xiao Yan was in controlling his momentum, the surrounding experienced mercenaries immediately exclaimed in admiration.

At the moment when his body came to a stop, the metal rod in Xiao Yan's hand was released and continued forward. Just like a released arrow, it shot towards Jia Lie Ao's head.

Watching the metal rod flying towards him, Jia Lie Ao smiled disdainfully. With the flip of the hand with the floating green Dou Qi, the air in front of him became turbulent and a few small green hurricanes appeared.

After bypassing a few small hurricanes, the metal rod's strength was easily eliminated.

Losing its strength, the metal rod fell onto the ground half a meter away from Jia Lie Ao with a clear and loud crash.

"Ah..." Observing Xiao Yan's offensive being easily overcome, the surrounding people could not help but sigh. Jia Lie Ao, who possessed a high level skill seemed to be unbeatable.

Chapter 87: Try To Kill

"Jie, Xiao Yan's situation isn't looking too good." Looking towards the field at the weapon-less Xiao Yan, Xiao Ning said nervously.

Xiao Yu, with a calm and collected face whispered: "Why should I care if he dies, he wanted to be a hero. Now he's better. He failed to become a hero and is being bullied by others while losing face." Slightly staying silent for a moment, Xiao Yu sighed: "Get ready to save him. Jia Lie Ao, that scoundrel looks like he's out for blood."

Xiao Ning nodded his head reluctantly and did not dare to get on her bad side.

Compared to the nervous Xiao Yu, Xun Er appeared to be exceedingly calm. The pupils of her eyes swept across the field and fell upon the disadvantaged Xiao Yan while her luscious lips held a faint smile.

Sidestepping with some difficulty, Xiao Yan dodged Jia Lie Ao's attack. Just as Xiao Yan retreated, Jia Lie Ao closed in since the wind attribute technique amplified his speed. Clenching his fists firmly, with a fierce expression, Jia Lie Ao heavily attacked towards Xiao Yan's head.

With his back to the wall, unable to evade, Xiao Yan's face was still as calm as pond water and slowly let out a breath. A faint yellow Dou Qi ferociously rushed out onto his clenched fists. With an indomitable violent manner, he finally started to direct clash with Jia Lie Ao.

Seeing that Xiao Yan chose to meet force with force against Jia Lie Ao, the surrounding crowd could not help but make some commotion. The large discrepancy between the levels of both sides was obvious. If Xiao Yan had continued to choose to evade, then he could still stall the fight. But if he chose brute force, then he would undoubtedly be defeated.

Just when everyone was about to feel pity for Xiao Yan, those firmly held fists of Xiao Yan suddenly spread out and a fierce formless pushing force abruptly appeared and ruthlessly smashed into Jia Lie Ao's stomach.

Jia Lie Ao's stomach suffered an indescribably powerful attack as his

quick and violent charge was immediately reflected back. His face became pale and with eyes full of maliciousness, a thought hurriedly flashed through his head: “What Dou technique is this? How could it be so strange?”

The faces of many people watching were astonished after seeing Jia Lie Ao unexpectedly blown backwards.

“Vacuum hand!”

Spreading out his palm and targeting Jia Lie Ao who was flying back, Xiao Yan, with an extremely sinister gaze chose the best opportunity. Immediately, with a wild suction force, he ruthlessly pulled at Jia Lie Ao.

In midair, pulled back as if he were a leather ball, Jia Lie Ao became extremely furious and gritted his teeth towards Xiao Yan who was getting closer and closer while holding a trace of cruelty on his face. Cyan Dou Qi quickly condensed onto the surface of his fist, unexpectedly forming into a small whirlpool: “Low Xuan Dou Technique: Green Wind Whirling Fist!”

The fist in midair brought a sound of piercing wind while the immense wind pressure from the technique blew back the junk on the ground next to Xiao Yan.

Slightly narrowing his eyes, feeling that colliding violent wind pressure, Xiao Yan’s complexion gradually turned grave. His body, after a moment of silence, suddenly turned around. His right foot stamped firmly onto the wall with an enormous force, leaving a half-inch deep imprint. Using the wall’s counter force, Xiao Yan’s body whirled around in midair and his right leg curved into a weird arc. In this moment, his flexible legs appeared as if they were as hard as steel.

“Octane Blast!”

Pursing his lips, Xiao Yan’s face was cold. His right foot in the air had finally stored up enough force and under the gazes of the crowd, it met with Jia Lie Ao’s oncoming fist and made an explosion on contact.

“Don’t get cocky just because you’re a three star Dou Zhe!”

At the moment foot and fist clashed, yellow Dou Qi rushed forth from

Xiao Yan's right leg with a light sound, making Jia Lie Ao's face change abruptly.

"Bang!" Fist and foot collided as a muffled thunder arose from the point of contact.

"Kacha!" Right at the moment of contact, the sound of bones being broken pierced through the air. Following the noise, Xiao Yan and Jia Lie Ao's bodies flew backwards at almost the same time.

His body smashing heavily against the wall behind him, Xiao Yan tasted something sweet rise up in his throat and then spat out a mouthful of blood that sprayed onto the ground.

Seeing that Xiao Yan had vomited blood, the mercenaries in the vicinity all sighed with regret. They all thought that Xiao Yan had already been defeated but suddenly Jia Lie Ao, who had fiercely slammed onto the ground, suddenly gripped his right hand. He rolled all about on the floor, releasing howls of anguish.

Within the crowd, there was no lack of shrewd spectators. Once they noticed the grotesque shape that Jia Lie Ao's arm had been twisted into, they couldn't help but draw a sharp breath, their faces displaying shock.

The sounds of clamor within the crowd went silent at this moment. Gazes of astonishment fixated on the youth who was panting heavily near the wall. After a long while, cheers suddenly erupted into the air.

Her red lips slightly parted, Xiao Yu gazed in disbelief at Jia Lie Ao who was wailing miserably and said in amazement: "That little bastard, he actually won?"

"It seems that way. That guy's arm was broken by Xiao Yan....." Xiao Ning swallowed a mouthful of saliva. Xiao Yan's ferocious attack made him recall the miserable condition he had been put in before. However, Jia Lie Ao's current condition was obviously worse, about ten times worse. Staring at the Jia Lie Ao whose bone was nearly sticking out of his arm, Xiao Ning could tell that this guy's arm was most likely permanently disabled.

Hearing Xiao Ning's confirmation, Xiao Yu didn't speak for a while. Her vision fiercely fixated on Xiao Yan who was gasping for air: "So it turns out that this little bastard had already advanced into the Dou Zhe realm. No wonder he wasn't the least bit scared."

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After sitting on the ground for a whole ten minutes, Xiao Yan slowly climbed to his feet and swept a cold glance at the nearby Liu Xi who gawked stupidly. Dragging his numb right leg, he picked up an iron rod at his side. He gazed ominously at the howling Jia Lie Ao on the ground and drew over with difficulty. Jia Lie Ao's attack from just a moment ago already revealed the murderous intent he had towards Xiao Yan. To those who wanted his life, Xiao Yan wouldn't be unnecessarily merciful either.

Lying on the ground and staring at the Xiao Yan who drew steadily nearer, Jia Lie Ao's face no longer held any hint of viciousness but rather looked panic-stricken as he swallowed a mouthful of saliva. He could clearly distinguish that look of murder in Xiao Yan's eyes, and couldn't help but hastily say: "I yield!"

Xiao Yan's face was completely expressionless and seemed as if he didn't even hear a word. He gripped the iron rod in his hand even tighter.

Looking at that youth's steeled expression, even if it was the bloodthirsty mercenaries, they couldn't help but feel a bit frightened. The current Xiao Yan made it hard for people to believe that he and the previously ever-smiling youth were the same person.

His steps halting, Xiao Yan towered above Jia Lie Ao and stared at him. He suddenly grinned but that full smile which showed off those pearly white teeth made Jia Lie Ao's heart grow cold. Only now did he realize that this youth who was normally as calm as a sheep, actually possessed a heart even more cruel than his.

"Die, you scum....."

Laughing lightly, Xiao Yan's pitch black pupils suddenly radiated even sharper killing intent and the black iron rod in his hand whistled fiercely through the air to smash towards Jia Lie Ao's head.

Chapter 88: Conclusion

Staring at the merciless Xiao Yan, Jia Lie Ao's face turned white; a frightened expression enveloped his face.

On the street, the observers spontaneously sucked in a breath of cold air as they watched Jia Lie Ao about to be killed. Xiao Yan's decisive move led to many people changing their opinion of him.

Xiao Yu opened her red and moist mouth as her entire body was utterly frozen on the spot. Xiao Yan's ruthless and decisive character had totally overturned the gentle image she had of him. She had never expected that the young boy who she usually fought and lost her temper with could practice ruthlessness with such familiarity.

Everyone's gaze followed the metal rod in Xiao Yan's hands. When the metal rod was half a meter away from Jia Lie Ao's head, however, there was a sudden violent sound that was like a clap of thunder. On the street, someone abruptly called: "Brat from the Xiao clan, a challenge's purpose is to learn from each other. You actually dare to be so brutal?"

Hearing the furious scream, Xiao Yan narrowed his eyes, the edge of his mouth curled into a cold smile. Instead of stopping, the metal rod in his hand smashed downwards with an even more vicious force.

"Move aside!" Xiao Yan's action had obviously fanned the flames of the person who had shouted. With a curse, an extremely sharp wind energy was released, whistling forward. Like green lightning, it cut across the middle of Xiao Yan's metal rod and instantly, the firm and hard metal rod was cleanly cut into two midair.

Xiao Yan's face changed when the metal rod was broken into two. Clenching his teeth, Xiao Yan wanted to ruthlessly pierce the remaining half of the metal rod into Jia Lie Ao's throat when the green wind stuck once again. The strong pressure from the wind actually caused Xiao Yan to have difficulty breathing.

Shrinking his eyes, he used all his strength to pierce forward with the metal rod. However, he was blocked by an invisible air film that could not

be broken.

Twitching his lips, Xiao Yan's right hand tightly gripped the rod as his body moved slightly and twisted over. The metal rod left his hand and became a black shadow, ferociously shooting toward the figure flying towards him.

"Hmph!" Seeing that Xiao Yan had actually dared to attack him, the figure coldly snorted. His hands curled into claws and fiercely waved in front of him. The thick green Dou Qi formed a few pale green wind blades.

Raising his finger, the wind blades left his hands and cut the metal rod into over ten pieces.

"To have such a ruthless heart despite being so young. Today, I shall teach you a lesson in Xiao Zhan's stead!" The figure coldly laughed after cutting the metal rod into pieces. Within both of his palms, green Dou Qi was being quickly gathered. A cyclon gathered under his legs and lifted him into the air. Like a cannon, he threw himself towards Xiao Yan. A pale green wind blade appeared just as he waved his palm and explosively shot toward Xiao Yan.

The air pressure originating from the wind blades blew the ground free of any dirt.

"Teach me a lesson? Who do you think you are? You should discipline your son first." Xiao Yan shook his head and smiled coldly. From the attribute of the Dou Qi, he had recognised the figure to be Jia Lie Ao's father, Jia Lie Bi.

Xiao Yan watched the wind blades that were shooting towards him with a calm face. When they were five meters from his head, Xiao Yan violently struck his palm in the direction of the ground. A shapeless burst of air was released and upon coming into contact with the ground, pushed Xiao Yan's body into the air. He somersaulted in the air and landed on an empty piece of land dozens of meters away.

The wind blades missed. With a "clang", many deep scars were left on the hard rock surface of the ground.

“Father, kill him!” Seeing the figure who swooped down, Jia Lie Ao’s face was filled with unrestrained happiness as he viciously cried.

Landing on the ground, Jia Lie Bi darkly glimpsed at Jia Lie Ao’s hand. His face slightly tensed and a cold killing intent appeared in his eyes. Without replying, he pushed off from the ground and once again frenziedly rushed at Xiao Yan. “Let me see just how great this genius of the Xiao Clan really is.”

Only a short time had passed from the appearance of Jia Lie Bi to the hurried retreat of Xiao Yan. The crowd recognized Jia Lie Bi and began to boo; a Da Dou Shi had launched a sneak attack at a Dou Zhe!

“Wow, Jia Lie you old dog. You big watermelon. You actually have the face to attack?” Xiao Yan scolded. Seeing how Jia Lie Bi ignored the difference in their status and once again rushed towards him, Xiao Yan’s face finally started to ashen.

“Brat! After breaking my son’s arm, you can forget about leaving in one piece.” Jia Lie Bi stepped off the ground. Like the wind, he bizarrely appeared above Xiao Yan. A sinister expression flashed across his face. His fist fiercely tightened and a turbulent green Dou Qi quickly gathered into a huge swirl.

“Crap. You are even using a Xuan Level Dou Technique? You old dog. You have brought shame on the entire Jia Lie clan!” Feeling the ferocious strength that was gathered on Jia Lie Bi’s fist, Xiao Yan’s face turned very ugly. Secretly, he began pulling the black ring on his finger.

A short distance away, Xun Er’s face changed upon seeing the danger Xiao Yan was in. Slowly taking a breath, a golden flame appeared in her clear eyes. In the blink of an eye, the pale golden Dou Qi was beginning to emit an aggressive energy.

Just as Xiao Yan was preparing to save himself and Xun Er was preparing to rescue him, a sudden loud yell filled with anger blasted across the street. “F***, you old dog. Since when has it become your turn to teach my son?”

When the cry died down, a flame covered figure sped over from beyond

the marketplace. Stomping his feet violently, he was propelled with lightning speed towards the front of Xiao Yan and raised his head to roar like a lion

“Furious Lion’s Rage!”

Looking awe-inspiring, Xiao Zhan tightened his iron fist and punched viciously at Jia Lie Bi above him. A huge red coloured lion head flashed on his fist.

“Boom!”

The green and red Qi made contact and exploded like a thunder, causing the ears of most of the people on the street to ring.

In mid-air, the two men engaging in combat shaked and hurriedly stepped back. As he was retreating, Xiao Zhan grabbed Xiao Yan with him.

The two men stepped on the ground hurriedly as they retreated, with each footstep leaving a visible footprint on the ground. From this, it was obvious just how strong both parties were.

Dissipating his Q!i, Xiao Zhan coldly stared at Jia Lie Bi just a short distance away. He coldly laughed: “Jia Lie Bi. You have really lived like a dog. To have the face to attack the younger generation...”

Jia Lie Bi’s face was dark. His mouth slightly twitched as he pointed towards Jia Lie Ao, who was lying on the ground. In a cold voice, he said: “He has hurt my son to such an extent. Xiao Zhan, you will give me an explanation!”

“Explanation? What explanation? If my son had not reacted fast enough, the one lying on the ground would have been him. If that had happened, would I hold you accountable?” Xiao Zhan sneered as he swiftly and fiercely scolded back.

“This challenge was issued by your son. Everyone present can be a witness. Moreover, in a challenge, losing one’s legs or arms is very common, why are you making such a big fuss over it?” Xiao Zhan ferociousness slowly faded as he said with a smile.

“You...” Jia Lie Bi’s face twitched in anxiety. He scanned the laughing gazes around him and knew that he had lost the opportunity to hurt Xiao Yan. Clenching his teeth angrily, he said: “Don’t give me any opportunity, otherwise...”

“I will return the same sentence to you.” Xiao Zhan’s eyes flashed with a vicious glint as he smiled.

“Good, good. Let’s wait and see!” Jia Lie Bi nodded his head and smiled furiously. He went over to lift the groaning Jia Lie Ao, turned around and left. As he passed Liu Xi and noticed the latter’s shocked and speechless manner, the anger in him rose once again. Taking a deep breath, he suppressed his anger and said: “Mister Liu Xi, let’s go.”

“Eh? That lady...” Liu Xi unwillingly gazed at Xun Er nearby.

With his eyes twitching, Jia Lie Bi was ready to kill, there and then, this idiot whose mind was filled with nothing but women. He tightened his fist. After a moment, he forced himself to put on an awful smile: “Regarding this matter, we shall discuss it further after returning home.”

“Ah, alright.” Seeing the pain on Jia Lie Bi’s face, Liu Xi could only unwillingly nod his head. His gaze once again obscenely swept across Xun Er’s before reluctantly leaving the marketplace with Jia Lie Bi.

Looking at the shameful looking Jia Lie Bi and group out of the city with his eyes, Xiao Zhan let out a cold laugh. His gaze swept across his surroundings before turning around and facing Xiao Yan, who had a trickle of blood on the corner of his mouth. His gaze was gentle as he heavily patted the latter’s shoulders. Sucking his lips, he regretfully said: “Your attacks are not vicious enough. Jia Lie Bi has only one son and today, if you had castrated him, Jia Lie Bi would have gone crazy. If that had happened, the three elders who are hiding outside would have had the excuse to kill him. Ze ze, what a wasted opportunity.”

Hearing this, Xiao Yan was stunned. He could not help but roll his eyes. On the other hand, Xun Er and Xiao Yu’s faces turned red at the dirty words as they stood on one side.

Listening to Xiao Zhan’s words, the surrounding mercenaries felt their

heads grow numb. No wonder the son was so vicious, his father was even more ruthless!

Chapter 89: Dark and Windy Night

The silver moon hung high in the sky, emitting a faint moonlight that covered the ground in a silvery layer that gave it a mysterious look.

After the disturbance in the day, Wu Tan City had become dark and quiet in the night. From within the houses on some streets, there was only the occasional sound of nightly activities

In a room in the backyard of the Xiao clan's home, a young man was lying on the bed. His eyes, as dark as the night sky, were filled with a cold quietness.

"Teacher, what is your strength in your current state?" After a long quietness, Xiao Yan abruptly asked in a soft voice.

"Why?" The black ring that he wore emitted a random response. A moment later, Yao Lao vaguely said: "Although I am currently in my soul form, I should have no problem handling some small flies like Da Dou This or Dou Lings with my heavenly flame."

Hearing this, a slight happiness appeared on Xiao Yan's face. His eyes, however, still carried a coldness.

"You wish to kill the boy from the afternoon?" Seeing Xiao Yan's behaviour, Yao Lao asked with surprise.

"Jia Lie Ao isn't deserving of such effort." Xiao Yan smiled and whispered. "Two months is fast approaching and I am losing my patience to drag out the competition with the Jia Lie clan. Thus, I am hoping to secretly kill the alchemist called Liu Xi. Once he dies, the Jia Lie clan without any healing medicine will lose their remaining market share. Once that happens, even if their clan can continue surviving, their strength would have greatly declined and will no longer be able to threaten the Xiao clan."

"Oh. Have you really lost your patience? Seeing your character, you don't appear to be an impulsive person." After a brief silence, Yao Lao's joking voice escaped from the ring. "It seems that you care a lot for the girl called

Xun Er. All that guy did was to act a little dirty yet you bear such a deep grudge. What a jealous child."

Hearing this, Xiao Yan's face warmed. The shame of having his thoughts so easily revealed arose his anger. "From the start, I did not have much time. How can I continue to play with them. Even if I had not met that guy today, I would have started using some tricks."

"Alright, alright. It has nothing to do with the girl..." Watching Xiao Yan's manner, Yao Lao laughed loudly. The mocking tone in his laughter caused Xiao Yan to roll his eyes helplessly.

"Since you wish to take action, let's get going. I am just a soul so I'll need to borrow your hands." Yao Lao ceased his laughter and said.

Hurriedly nodding his head, Xiao Yan quickly jumped off his bed. He took out a red storage ring from his breast pocket and retrieved a large black cloak which he had prepared beforehand. He pulled it over his body in a practiced manner and the thin body of the young man was transformed into a bloated, mysterious black-cloaked man.

"Let's go. You need not do anything. Just let me control your body. With my spirit encompassing you, you need not worry about anyone recognising you from your scent." Seeing the well-prepared Xiao Yan, Yao Lao gave a smiling reminder.

"Ah." Nodding his head, Xiao Yan easily reached the side of the window and scanned his surroundings like a thief. Only then did he jump out and his body quickly descended. Following which, a mysterious strong strength was emitted from the ring on his finger.

The mysterious strength quickly encompassed Xiao Yan's entire body. Immediately, the rapidly falling figure suddenly floated in midair. Stepping lightly off a roof, his black figure was like an eagle, silently speeding out of the Xiao clan's home and disappearing into the dark night.

The dark and windy night presented a good opportunity to kill.

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Jia Lie clan.

“Mister Liu is really able to refine other medicine?” In the well-lit hall, the originally anxious Jia Lie Bi was initially stunned upon hearing Liu Xi’s pleased announcement before asking happily.

Extremely satisfied with Jia Lie Bi’s surprised manner, Liu Xi lifted the tea cup beside him and took a sip. The expression on his face was very proud. “Besides healing medicine, I am able to refine something that’s very suited for the mercenaries’ use. The drug’s called “Explosive Strength Pill”. It can raise the strength of the user by ten percent for a short period of time.”

Hearing this, the happiness on Jia Lie Bi’s face grew . If a drug with such effect could be refined, he could use it as an advertisement to attract quite a lot of people. He might even be able to once again suppress the Xiao clan.

“Unfortunately, this “Explosive Strength Pill” cannot be refined in bulk like the healing medicine. With my current ability, I am afraid I can only refine twenty pills a day.” Liu Xi said in a regretful voice.

“Haha, twenty pills it is. We can create something like an auction, where the highest bidder will get it. In any case, the healing medicine is the main aim. We are only using this to raise our popularity.” Jia Lie Bi waved his hand and said with a smile.

“Hey. Clan Leader Jia Lie, I am indeed able to make this “Explosive Strength Pill”, but according to our agreement, I am only responsible for making the healing medicine.” Seeing how the “Explosive Strength Pill” had attracted Jia Lie Bi, a thought struck Liu Xi and he abruptly spoke.

Jia Lie Bi’s face suddenly changed. The crafty man knew what the guy was planning. However, at this stage, all he could do was to laugh dryly and ask: “What is Mister Liu Xi’s meaning?”

“Haha, relax. I know what kind of situation the Jia Lie clan is in right now so I won’t ask for much.” Watching a relaxed Jia Lie Bi, a sinister smile flashed across Liu Xi’s eyes. “All I want is Clan Leader Jia Lie to help me get hold of the lady called Xun Er.”

Before a smile could appear, Jia Lie Bi’s face stiffened. The corner of his

eye twitched. He had not expected that this guy, who was strongly driven by sexual urges, would actually directly target the Xiao clan.

“Mister Liu Xi, if our Jia Lie clan touched a member of the Xiao clan, Xiao Zhan would have the excuse to openly attack us. By then, it would not be just a business confrontation but actual violence...“ Sighing, Jia Lie Bi smiled bitterly,

Tapping his finger on the table, Liu Xi quietly said: “This is not a matter for me to consider. I don’t care if Clan Leader plans to forcefully snatch or stealthily drug her. All I care about is the result. As long as you can bring her to me, I will begin to refine the “Explosive Strength Pill”.”

The corner of Jia Lie Bi’s eye twitched. Despite his anger surging, he could only forcefully laugh: “Can you give me time to think? May I give you an answer tomorrow?”

“Hee Hee. It’s just as well. Clan Leader, you may think it over. Before I leave, I would like to add something. The Jia Lie clan and the Xiao clan have already become irreconcilable enemies, so why do you need to worry about adding another grudge into the mix?” Laughing perversely, Liu Xi stood up, patted his backside and swaggered out of the hall. With hurried footsteps, he headed towards his room in the backyard. The lotus-like extraordinary young lady from the day had ignited the lust in him. All he wanted to do now was to find a young and beautiful servant girl to relieve his lust.

Gazing at Liu Xi who disappeared into a corner, Jia Lie Bi turned even more gloomy. It was only after a long time that he exhaled a long breath and thickly said: “This bastard, whose head is full of women, would sooner or later die at the hands of one.”

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In a room at the backyard, Xiao Yan helplessly watched the knocked-out beautiful lady lying on the bed. Her body was covered only by a thin robe, exposing much of her naked body.

“That guy’s back.” Yao Lao whispered from within the ring, causing Xiao Yan to quickly squeeze into a hidden corner. Through a small gap, his eyes

managed to observe everything in the room.

“Creak...” The wooden door was slowly pushed open. Liu Xi discernable laughter instantly came from within the room. “Ha ha. Precious, I am here. Prepare to be ruined tonight.”

“What a sperm-filled head idiot. Yao Lao, prepare to strike.” Xiao Yan said in his heart as he coldly smiled and shook his head.

“Alright... wait, there’s a change!” Yao Lao shouted a warning just as he was about to agree, resulting in Xiao Yan’s heart tightening.

His forehead was full of perspiration after being frightened by Yao Lao’s warning yell, Xiao Yan stayed where he was, not daring to move.

“On your left!” Within his heart, Yao Lao’s voice once again emerged.

Listening to the warning, Xiao Yan slowly turned his head. His gaze shifted to the window on his left and his eyes suddenly contracted.

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The originally closely-shut window had already been unknowingly opened, allowing the pale moonlight to scatter into the room. In the blink of an eye, the emptiness in the window and its surroundings was strangely replaced by a young lady in a golden dress. Below the golden dress was a pair of jade-like round and white small feet which drew an attractive arc in midair.

Moonlight spilled into the room, shining on the exquisite face of the young lady. It was just like a goddess under the moonlight, beautiful yet mysterious.

Gazing at the sudden appearance of the young lady, Xiao Yan felt his throat becoming dry. His heart softly moaned a name.

“Xun... Xun Er?”

Chapter 90: Arranging Everything

After staring at the young lady who had appeared beside the window like a ghost, Xiao Yan whispered in surprise, "What is she doing here?"

"He he. From the looks of things, it seems that she has the same intentions as you." Yao Lao softly said with a smile.

Frowning slightly, Xiao Yan hid his entire body within the shadows. He immediately but with some hesitation asked in his heart again: "Xun Er's strength... why is it so overwhelming? Looking at the speed at which she had appeared, it seems comparable to that of a Da Dou Shi."

"Her real strength is indeed what you usually see. For now, she is clearly using a secret technique that enables her to temporarily raise her strength for a period of time. Considering her background, being in possession of such a mystical secret technique is not something surprising." Yao Lao indifferently said.

Hearing this, Xiao Yan was slightly shocked and bitterly laughed in amazement. Once again, his inner curiosity about Xun Er's mysterious background led him to sigh helplessly. Shaking his head, he stopped thinking. His gaze passed through the curtain on the opposite side and watched the strangeness unfold.

Within the room, the sudden ghost like appearance of Xun Er had yet to catch Liu Xi's attention. For the moment, he was entirely overcome by lust and had his pair of eyes staring at the beautiful woman on the bed. His hands were tugging at his clothes in a mad rush.

At some point, Liu Xi's hand, which was tugging at his clothes, froze. As a six star Dou Zhe, he had finally felt that there was something amiss. After a brief hesitation, he slowly turned his neck and his gaze shot to the widely opened window.

On top of the window was a young lady in a golden dress lazily leaning on the window frame. A pair of eyes which were filled with a golden colored flame were indifferently watching the partially dressed man in the room. Floating above her white hand was a golden flame that was orbiting

in an active and bewitching manner, much like a spirit.

Liu Xi foolishly stared at the young lady who was bathed under the moonlight. He slowly shifted his gaze until it landed on her indifferent and exquisite small face. Within his eyes, a tipsy feeling emerged. Despite the wrong atmosphere, Liu Xi could not help but become slightly dazed in the face of the perfect face and extraordinary disposition.

After being in a daze, however, Liu Xi abruptly turned around. Slamming his feet on the ground, his body crazily shot towards the main entrance like a released arrow. In this strange atmosphere and with a cold feeling of being near death, he knew that the young lady's sudden appearance was not a good sign.

The room might have been spacious, but with Liu Xi's speed, he only needed a short few seconds to move from the bed to the front door. Seeing that the wooden door was within reach, happiness flashed across Liu Xi's eyes. Once he exited the room, he would be able to loudly call out for help. Once Jia Lie Bi heard his distress calls, he would immediately come over to rescue him.

Unfortunately, just as he was about to touch the wooden door, he felt a sudden pain in his legs. His body, which was running at extreme speed, tilted and slammed against the floor and Liu Xi coughed out a few of his broken teeth along with accompanying blood.

Lowering his head in terror, he saw that two fist sized bloodied holes had unknowingly appeared on both of his legs. The edge of the bloodied hole was entirely black while emitting a faint charred smell.

"Somebody! There's someone who wants to murder me!"

The intense pain from his legs nearly caused Liu Xi to faint. However, he clenched his teeth and withstood it. Then he opened his mouth and screamed as loud as possible.

"You can stop shouting. The room is surrounded by my aura. No one can hear you." The young lady leaning on the window edge said indifferently. A golden flame blade formed on the tip of her finger as she lifted it. It seemed like the injury on Liu Xi's legs was caused by this flame blade.

“You... What do you intend to do? What do you want? Money? Medicine? I can give you anything as long as you let me go.” Watching the young lady with utter terror, Liu Xi’s face was utterly white. In the face of death, his lust was finally suppressed.

Glancing impassively at the crippled Liu Xi squirming on the ground, the young lady lightly jumped from the window. With slow continuous steps, she walked toward Liu Xi.

Watching the Xun Er who had lightly jumped from the window, Xiao Yan realised that her hair, which usually ended at her waist, had lengthened and extended down to her bottom. Apparently, this was another effect of the secret method.

In the spacious room, the young lady wearing the elegant golden dress continued to head toward Liu Xi, who was groaning on the ground. When she was in front of him, she halted her footsteps, lowered her head and gave a sudden light smile. The instantaneous smile caused Liu Xi’s heart to violently jump.

“Didn’t you wish to capture me?” Xun Er’s light voice was filled with coldness as she lowered herself.

Liu Xi swallowed his saliva. His face was filled with cold sweat that originated from his fear.

“I actually dislike killing...” Seeing Liu Xi’s terror stricken face, Xun Er suddenly sighed.

Hearing this, a faint hope appeared in Liu Xi’s eyes. Before he could beg for mercy, however, the sudden coldness that appeared on the young lady’s face sent him to an even greater despair.

“I don’t mind a little pointless gaze. But why did you insult him? What right do you have to insult him? He might not take to heart what trash, like you, said, but I cannot allow it. Really cannot!” As the young lady’s voice abruptly turned cold, the golden flame blade above her finger was suddenly and violently released. It transformed into golden lightning and penetrated Liu Xi’s chest. Instantly, a bloodied hole appeared.

Having received a fatal blow, Liu Xi's body suddenly contracted. His white face slowly went dark while his slightly protruding eyeballs looked frightening.

After indifferently glancing at the lifeless corpse, Xun Er stood up and lightly sighed. The cold small face exhibited a helplessness as she quietly whispered: "If I were not worried of Xiao Yan Ge-ge blaming me for being a busybody, the Jia Lie Clan would have long vanished from Wu Tang City. All these troublesome matters would not have appeared if that happened..."

Shaking her head, Xun Er's gaze randomly swept the room before turning her body. When she appeared again, she was already by the window. With a light leap, she disappeared into the night.

"Ze ze, to think that this girl who seemed to be so gentle and soft is actually decisive when it comes to killing people. Hehe, it seems you have found something precious." Yao Lao's joking voice sounded from Xiao Yan's heart not long after Xun Er left.

Bitterly smiling as he shook his head, Xiao Yan sighed once more. "It seems that I have made a futile trip tonight."

"Heh heh. That's hard to say. Although that girl was merciless in her attack, she's too young and lacks experience." Yao Lao spoke with a smile.

Hearing this, the stunned Xiao Yan immediately asked, "What do you mean?"

"Just watch..." Yao Lao smiled mysteriously before becoming quiet.

Seeing Yao Lao's manner, Xiao Yan could only shake his head and continue hiding himself in the dark. His gaze observed everything in the room.

The dark room, with the exception of the servant girl's breathing, was utterly quiet.

Xiao Yan waited quietly for over ten minutes. Just as he was beginning to frown, the eyes of the haphazardly fallen corpse of Liu Xi moved.

Beside the door, the hands of the originally lifeless Liu Xi had began to moved slightly. A moment later, the closed eyes slowly opened while the grayness on his face had also disappeared.

“Si...” Looking at the bloodied hole on his chest, Liu Xi took in a light cold breath. His eyes were filled with hatred. “Damn girl. Had I not stolen some ‘Turtle Breath Pill’ from teacher when I left, I would have really perished here.”

Reaching out his hand with great difficulty, Liu Xi extracted a jade bottle from his breast pocket. He carefully poured some of the white powder on his wound before taking out a pale green pill and swallowed it without hesitation. After completing these simple action, Liu Xi’s face once again turned pale.

“It will likely take at least half a year to recover from this serious injury. Tomorrow, I will ask the Jia Lie Clan to send me back and invite my teacher over. With teacher’s help, the Xiao Clan will not have any good days left. At that time, I will torture that woman until she dies.” Liu Xi sinisterly clenched his teeth. His face was filled with wickedness.

“Sorry to interrupt, but you may not have the chance to return...” As Liu Xi was imagining how he would proceed, a bland voice with a hint of laughter suddenly erupted from within the room.

The sudden voice caused Liu Xi to freeze. His face changed as he turned around with great difficulty.

A figure that was entirely covered in a black cloak slowly emerged from the shadows.

“What a careless girl. In the end, I am still required to put an end to it all.” A young man’s voice escaped from under the black cloak. His palm was lightly stretched out and a white Heavenly flame slowly emerged.

“A heavenly flame?” Seeing this strange white flame, Liu Xi’s eyes narrowed and he involuntarily cried out in horror.

“Congratulations, you are correct. Here’s your reward.”

With a smile, the black cloaked man waved his hand. The gloomy white

flame instantly left his hand. With lightning speed, it covered Liu Xi, burning him into a pile of ashes in the blink of an eye; Liu Xi did not even have the time to scream.

From that moment forth, the alchemist known as Liu Xi vanished from the continent.

Coldly clapping his hands, the black cloaked man waved his hands once more. A wind swept away the ashes on the ground, leaving a clean floor. Then, he leisurely lept from the window, soared into the air and sped off.

Without alerting anyone, the black cloaked man quickly left the Jia Lie Clan's home. His feet lightly touched the roof of a house and just as he leaped for a couple dozens of meters, he suddenly paused. Helplessly sighing, he gradually lifted his head.

On the edge of a tower to the side was a young lady in a golden dress who was randomly swinging her round snow-white feet. With limpid eyes that contained a golden flame, she was lazily staring at the black cloaked man on the roof.

"Who are you?"

The young lady's finger gently touched the black hair that was lifted by the night breeze as she lifted her delicate chin. Her agile voice reverberated through the small space around them.

Chapter 91: A meeting in the night

“Just who are you?”

Hearing this young girl’s calm voice, the black-clothed person shrugged his shoulders helplessly. After a short bit of silence, an aged voice slowly rang out, “I believe you’ve seen me at the Xiao Clan’s home?”

Lightly shaking her snow white legs, Xun Er’s glance roamed around. She offhandedly asked in a soft voice: “Why did you go to the Jia Lie clan?”

“I was entrusted by someone to settle some trouble.”

“Entrusted by someone?” Xun Er hurriedly asked, narrowing her eyes.

“Uh, this is something I cannot disclose.” Yao Lao waved his hands and said.

“But I want to know.” With a faint smile on her exquisite face, Xun Er leaped forward. Her body seemed to float in midair. On her finger, a spiraling pale golden flame with a pointed edge was quickly being formed.

“Heh heh, little girl, I know that you are very strong now but that is not enough to stop this old man.” Yao Lao said with a smile.

Xun Er knit her eyebrows but she did not speak. She raised her finger, causing several more spiraling golden flame blades to continue appearing.

Seeing that Xun Er was refusing to give up, the two men in the black cloak had a headache. Sighing once again, Yao Lao helplessly said, “I don’t wish to fight with you. If I hurt you accidentally, that guy would be heartbroken.”

“Alright, alright. I’m afraid of you. Today, there was someone stupid who took advantage of a girl who was held in high regards by another man. This other man happens to know me so I was requested to perform some task. Oh, do you think it is easy for an old man like me to run all over the place in the middle of the night?”

Xun Er’s long eyelashes lightly blinked, her exquisite face gradually became flushed. She flipped her hand and the flame blades slowly

disappeared. Gazing at the black cloaked man, she said with a wide smile, "As expected. Old sir and Xiao Yan ge-ge have a relationship."

"Heh, what a quick change in the manner you address me." Yao Lao said with a smile. "I'm afraid that you have already guessed my relationship with Xiao Yan a long time ago."

"In the past, it was only a guess that I couldn't be certain of." Xun Er shook her head with a smile. She bowed to Yao Lao while still in midair and said: "Although I am unaware of the old sir's background, I believe that you have something to do with Xiao Yan ge-ge being able to be rid of his weakened self from a year ago."

Yao Lao faintly laughed, neither denying nor confirming her conjunction.

With her beautiful eyes staring at the black cloaked man, Xun Er smiled sweetly and whispered, "Regardless of what was the original motive old sir had in approaching Xiao Yan ge-ge, I hope that you do not have any other intentions towards him. Xun Er will look at anyone who poses a threat to Xiao Yan ge-ge with enmity. Old sir may be very strong but believe me, I have the ability to say such things."

"Tsk tsk. What a strong girl." Hearing Xun Er's slightly threatening words, Yao Lao was stunned as he commented.

"My only wish is that Xiao Yan ge-ge not be deceived and hurt by others." With a slight smile, Xun Er once again bowed to Yao Lao and said, "It's already late. I need to return home. I hope that you will not tell Xiao Yan ge-ge what you have witnessed tonight."

"Rest assured. I will not mention a single word." Yao Lao nodded his head. Within him, he jokingly added, "Because he has already witnessed everything himself."

Hearing Yao Lao reply, Xun Er smiled. Just as she turned her body, a green shadow suddenly appeared. After being momentarily stunned, Xun Er's small hand reached out and drew it into her palms.

Xun Er was startled as she stared at the jade bottle. She shifted her gaze

toward the black cloaked man,

"Having used a secret technique, you will likely be weak for the next few days. This bottle contains 'Energy Replenishment Powder'. Keep it and recover quickly. Otherwise, someone will feel hurt seeing your sickly appearance." Yao Lao said indifferently.

Hearing this, Xun Er's small face turned red. Carrying the jade bottle in her hands, she nodded gratefully at the black cloaked man before lightly pressing her feet in the air. Her body quickly shot into the darkness and disappeared from sight.

Standing on the rooftop and watching the disappearing figure, Yao Lao suddenly took in a deep breath and muttered, "Back then, when you stealthily entered the girl's room and strangely came up with some useless idea of warming blood vessels, you had accidentally got hold of the girl's heart. Oh, come to think of it, you're luck is something that others would be jealous of."

Under the black cloaked, Xiao Yan rubbed his nose. He knew very well that had it not been for the incident in their childhood, the grown up Xun Er would have treated him with the same attitude that she gave others.

Of course, these hypothetical thoughts held no water in front of reality. Heh heh, he had silently entered the heart of a girl at her most fragile moment and unintentionally left a memory which consisted only of him within her heart.

Laughing a little proudly, Xiao Yan cupped his hands behind his head and allowed Yao Lao to control his body. His body quickly shot toward the Xiao clan's home.

Once he reached the Xiao clan's home, Xiao Yan carefully avoided the courtyard where Xun Er's room was to not alert her about his presence. He landed in the courtyard near his room and rushed into his room, gently closing the door behind him as he did so.

In his room, Xiao Yan hurriedly removed the black cloak and stored it within the storage ring. Only then did he heave a sigh of relief. He weakly lay on his bed and lazily mumbled to himself, "Oh, what a beautiful night."

.....

In the early morning of the next day at the Jia Lie clan's home.

Jia Lie Bi's current expression was gloomy and frightening. Threads of cold aura were emitted from his body, terrifying the kneeling beautiful female servant who was trembling in fear.

Sweeping his cold gaze across the room where Liu Xi had resided, Jia Lie Bi's said crisply: "You said that Liu Xi had disappeared?"

"Yes, clan leader. Yesterday, this lowly servant suddenly fainted without reason and only woke up the next morning. Master Liu Xi was already missing by then. This lowly servant had asked the guards outside but they have not seen Master Liu Xi either." The female servant cautiously said while trembling in fear.

"From the time he returned to his room yesterday night, I have not detected him leaving. Moreover, there are Dou Si level guards posted at the two entrances into the Jia Lie clan's home. With Liu Xi's ability he would not be able to leave the place without anyone noticing."

"This girl doesn't know either." The servant girl's face was ashened. She was afraid that Jia Lie Bi would put the blame on her.

Jia Lie Bi felt the corner of his eyes twitch. His feelings were in a mess as he took in a deep breath and ignored the quivering female servant. Slowly, he walked to every corner of the room.

Seeing Jia Lie Bi's action, the servant girl dared not speak. Her kneeling body did not even dare move an inch.

As he was walking through the quiet room, Jia Lie Bi suddenly came to a stop at one corner. His eyes stared at the small pile of ashes at the corner of the room.

With his heart beating wildly, Jia Lie Bi bent down. He used his finger to extract some of the powder and sniffed it under his nose. Instantly, the cold expression turned into fear.

Jia Lie Bi let out a deep breath. He suddenly felt that his legs were a little

numb. A cold feeling was slowly but uncontrollably coming up from deep within his heart.

“Liu Xi... was actually murdered under my watch?”

Chapter 92: Rob

By the time Xiao Yan woke up from his sleep, the sky was already very bright. Warm sunlight entered through the gaps in the window, leaving spots of light on the ground.

Getting up, Xiao Yan's sleepy gaze was hazy as he sat on the bed and stared blankly for a long while before finally getting rid of his desire to continue sleeping. Shaking his waking head, he lazily got out of bed and randomly washed his face.

Just as his washing was done, a faint knock vibrated from the door. This was coupled with a young lady's soft and gentle voice: "Xiao Yan ge-ge, have you not woken up?"

Hearing this voice, Xiao Yan's eyebrows twitched. He quickly wiped off the moisture on his face and walked to the door. The door screeched as he slowly pulled it open.

After opening the door, a blinding light suddenly shot into the room, causing Xiao Yan to habitually close his eyes. A while later, he slowly opened his eyes and shifted his gaze to the lady in green who was standing quietly by the doorway.

Today, Xun Er was once again wearing green. Her appropriate clothes matched her lotus-like refinement, prompting the young man in the room to let out some praise in his heart.

After randomly scanning Xun Er's delicate and slim body, his gaze finally landed on the slightly pale exquisite small face. His eyebrows could not help but form a frown. "What happened?"

With charming big eyes focused on Xiao Yan's expression and finding nothing but accusation. Xun Er immediately replied with a smile, "I'm not feeling well. It's no big deal."

"Not feeling well?" Xiao Yan's eyebrows twitched as he walked out of the room. After closing the door, his palm suddenly grabbed Xun Er's small hand. A weak and warm Dou Qi under the control of his spiritual

perception, slowly circulated in Xun Er's body.

A moment later, Xiao Yan expressionlessly retrieved his Dou Qi and sighed in his heart. It seems that the secret technique Xun Er had used last night was extremely exhausting. In her body right now, only a little weak Dou Qi was flowing. Clearly, this was the aftermath of using the secret technique.

During the early morning, there were many clan members who had woken up to practice. This group was filled with envy upon seeing Xiao Yan holding Xun Er's hands while standing by the doorway.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge." A red faced Xun Er lightly whispered as she struggled to free her hands.

"I have no idea what you have done. How can you become so weak?" Putting down Xun Er's small hand, Xiao Yan stiffened his face and softly said.

After those intelligent big eyes scanned Xiao Yan's face and once again found nothing, Xun Er secretly heaved a sigh of relief and smiled, "Yesterday I had tried to train a Dou technique that surpassed my level and this is the result. I'll be fine after a few days of rest. Xiao Yan ge-ge need not worry."

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan could only shake his head helplessly as he accompanied Xun Er to breakfast. After that, he found an excuse and secretly left the clan.

.....

Xiao Yan walked aimlessly in Wu Tan City and casually inquired about news on the Jia Lie clan. Liu Xi's disappearance would definitely cause some sensation within the Jia Lie clan. Contrary to his expectations, however, he could not discover any abnormality in the Jia Lie clan. The marketplaces had continued to operate and the healing medicine continued to be sold. There was nothing different.

"Heh. No wonder this Jia Lie Bi is a clan leader. He could actually suppress this news. Still, he might be able to suppress this for a day but he

can't do it forever. Once the remaining healing medicine is sold out, I want to see what he can do." Xiao Yan laughed coldly for a while before heading to the Primer Auction House at the center of the city.

In a remote area outside the auction house, Xiao Yan put on a black cloak just like he always did and entered the busy auction house.

Upon entering the auction house, Xiao Yan was courteously led into the VIP room by a beautiful female waiter. He waited for a moment before the graceful looking Ya Fei appeared with a smile in front of Xiao Yan.

"Haha, an important guest. Xiao Yan Di-di, what brings you to the auction house?" Lifting a tea pot, she personally bent her body and poured a cup of tea for Xiao Yan as she spoke.

Whether it was intentional or otherwise, the attractive snow white skin on on Yan Fei's chest appeared and disappeared as she bent her body to pour tea. It caused one's eyes to be fixated on it.

"Ke..." Xiao Yan's gaze was almost lost in the magnificent view but he used his fairly strong willpower and managed to shift his gaze away with a dry cough. His gaze did not leave his cup of tea as he pulled out a dark red storage ring from his breast pocket and extracted five small jade bottles from it. In an indifferent voice, he said: "Today, I am here to fulfill our agreement." As Ya Fei already knew about his identity, Xiao Yan no longer let Yao Lao speak for him and simply used his young voice.

Ya Fei's gaze never left the small jade bottles upon their appearance. Happiness appeared on her enchanting face.

Ya Fei elegantly sat on the chair beside Xiao Yan. She carefully picked up one of the jade bottles and weighed it with equal care. After which, she slightly opened the bottle. A green coloured round pill naughtily rolled out from the bottle.

Taking a deep breath of the medicinal smell that assailed her nostrils, Ya Fei's beautiful eyes constricted. A while later, Ya Fei finally attentively returned the pill to the bottle. She threw an enchanting and beautiful smile at Xiao Yan who was beside her. "It seems that Xiao Yan Di-di is prepared to take action against the Jia Lie clan. Otherwise, why would you

come over to prematurely complete our deal?"

Hearing this, he shrugged his shoulders, neither denying nor acknowledging it. He took out another scroll which contained the names of some medicinal ingredients. These medicinal ingredients had the ability to recover one's strength. Naturally, this was prepared for Xun Er. Seeing her weak and pale face, Xiao Yan felt his heart ache.

Receiving the scroll from Xiao Yan, Ya Fei, who had a number of such experiences, knew Xiao Yan's meaning. Without any unnecessary words, she proceeded to call a female waiter and got her to quickly prepare what was on the list.

Sitting in the quiet VIP room, Xiao Yan, who had been silent, suddenly said, "It appears that the Jia Lie clan has gone to other cities in search for a new source for medicinal ingredients."

"Em, the Jia Lie clan is now working with a medicinal supplier in Te Lan City, However, the price of the medicinal ingredients they purchased from there is four times more expensive than it is in Wu Tan City." Ya Fei nodded and agreed with a smile.

"To think that they are willing." Mockingly shaking his head, Xiao Yan continued with a smile. "Can you provide me with some information on the transportation of these medicines?"

Hearing this, Ya Fei's hand which was holding a tea cup trembled. Her beautiful eyes stared at the young man beside her with astonishment and said, "What do you plan to do?"

"Rob."

After a bitter smile, Ya Fei once again sighed: "The Jia Lie clan was really unlucky to meet a little fiend like you."

Shaking her head, Ya Fei became quiet. She finally stood up and went to the room behind her. After some time, she finally came out with a scroll and handed it to Xiao Yan. She quietly whispered, "I have received some information from the auction house in Te Lan City. Two days ago, the Jia Lie clan had once again purchased four hundred thousand gold coins

worth of medicinal ingredients. This batch of medicinal ingredients should reach Wu Tan City by this afternoon.”

“The Jia Lie clan has only paid one hundred thousand gold coins as deposit for this batch of medicinal ingredients. The remaining three hundred thousand gold coins is on credit. Protecting the medicinal ingredients are the warriors of the Jia Lie clan, three Dou Shi’s and a Da Dou Shi. There are also another few dozen guards with at least the strength of a Dou Zhe.

“Four hundred thousand? What a large amount.” Xiao Yan said with a smile as he deposited the scroll into the storage ring. His laughter slowly became colder. “If this batch of medicinal ingredients disappeared, I wonder how they would account to the medicinal supplier. With the current Jia Lie clan being close to bankruptcy, this three hundred thousand gold credit would be its final blow.”

Lifting his head, Xiao Yan watched a female waiter who had just entered. After cupping one hand over the other and thanking Ya Fei, he went forward and received the medicinal ingredients before walking out of the hall without a backward glance.

Sitting on the chair and watching the decisive manner in which Xiao Yan left, Ya Fei laughed bitterly and shook her head. She gently sighed: “This little boy’s actions do not correspond with his age at all. That old man, Jia Lie Bi, is likely going to be in deep trouble...”

Chapter 93: Midway Destruction of Medicine

Seven or eight horse drawn carriages slowly trotted down the road under the scorching sun of the noontide heat. In its overbearing heat, the guards all around the carts were drenched in a fine mist of sweat and agitated voices drifted out from the carriages.

Part of the escort team was Jia Lie Nu, a three star Da Dou Shi and one of the two elders of the Jia Lie Clan, was considered one of the strongest within Wu Tan City. With his strength, having him personally escort the medicinal ingredients highlighted the importance they held to the clan. However, it would seem that Jia Lie Nu had received no news of the disappearance of Liu Xi, otherwise the elder would've immediately returned the expensive ingredients.

Jia Lie Nu sat crossed leg on one of the horse drawn carriages. Regardless of how much the carriages tossed and shook, his body did not move. Having lived in luxury and comfort for some time, he was growing impatient after two days of travel.

"It's all because of that damn Xiao Clan. Sooner or later, I will destroy all of you." Jia Lie Nu clenched his teeth and muttered angrily. He then turned his head slightly and observed the neatly-stacked medicinal ingredients through a window behind him. A look of helplessness appeared on his expressionless face.

Although storage rings would certainly make transportation more convenient, a low-grade ring only had two or three cubic meters worth of space and in order to fully store all the medicinal ingredients it would have required at least five low-grade storage rings. These rings were rare and expensive, and even the entire Jia Lie Clan had two. Thus, they could only use the cumbersome method of carriages to transport the ingredients.

Tiredly blinking his eyes, Jia Lie Nu, who had began napping, realised that the carriage at the front had suddenly stopped. Faint angry shouts

vibrated through the air.

Furrowing his eyebrows, Jia Lie Nu was about to call someone to investigate what happened, when a guard of the Jia Lie clan came hurrying from the front. He urgently reported, “Elder, there is a black-cloaked man blocking our path.”

Hearing this, Jia Lie Nu’s face darkened. Now that they have entered the territory of Wu Tang City, who would dare block them?

With a cold glint appearing in his eyes, Jia Lie Nu nodded his head slightly and hopped off the horse carriage. He swiftly progressed in the direction of the convoy and finally saw a black-cloaked man sitting on a huge rock in the middle of the road. Although he could not see the black-cloaked man’s face, he could feel the ill intention from the gaze of the black-cloaked man.

“Who are you? Why are you blocking our path?” Jia Lie Nu’s gaze swept across the black-cloaked man before asking in a deep voice.

“You must be members of the Jia Lie Clan, no?” An aged voice escaped from below the black cloak.

Jia Lie Nu’s face twitched. With a somber expression, he waved his arm. The dozens of guards behind him immediately drew their weapons from their waist and stared inhospitably at the unknown and mysterious black-cloaked man.

“Well, it seems that I was right.” Looking at the reaction from Jia Lie Nu, the black cloaked man simply smiled and leaped from the huge rock before strolling over to the convoy.

Coldly watching the approaching black-cloaked man, Jia Lie Nu grabbed a huge bow and arrow from the guard beside him. He pulled at the bowstring and the bow bent like a cord. Upon release, the arrow transformed into a ferocious wind and shot towards the black-cloaked man’s throat.

Accompanying the arrow was a frightening whistle of breaking wind. When it was one meter away from the black-cloaked man however, a

group of white flames appeared suddenly, turning the arrow into black ashes as soon as it touched the flame.

Watching the scene before him, Jia Lie Nu's face changed color. An uneasiness began rising from within him. It appeared that the black-cloaked man in front of him was not weaker than a Da Dou Shi.

Slowly releasing his breath, Jia Lie Nu grabbed a deep blue long spear from a guard behind him. A faint blue Dou Qi was emitted from his body. Instantly, the surrounding air became more humid. Clearly, his Qi Method was that of the dark and chilly water element.

Grabbing the long spear, Jia Lie Nu stared intently at the black-cloaked man. He adjusted his body slightly before suddenly jumping off the ground. His body turned into a blue light, rushing forward and closing in on the black-cloaked man.

In midair, Jia Lie Nu maintained a respectful face as the long spear suddenly and violently shook. The Dou Qi on it shone brilliantly. With a vibration of the spear, echos followed.

“Overlapping Waves!”

“Overlapping Waves” a Low Xuan Dou Technique, was the strongest technique that Jia Lie Nu could fully control. His long period of training had allowed him to master this Dou Technique to perfection. Being released at its full force, the strength was such that even a six star Da Dou Shi would not dare to underestimate it.

Following the yell from Jia Lie Nu, a huge blue wave comprised of energy emitted from within the shining blue long rod. The huge wave of energy rose up high into the sky before abruptly gashing towards the rooted black-cloaked man.,,

Around the convoy, proud cheers erupted upon seeing their elder reveal his god-like strength. Throughout their journey, the group had met a couple of robbers, but each and everyone of them were all killed under Jia Lie Nu's spear. In most people's eyes, another victim was about to be added.

The huge blue wave rolled along the horizon. Within it, a tiny light suddenly expanded. Like lightning, a long spear shot toward the black-cloaked man's head.

"Die!" Seeing that the target was almost within reach, a sinister expression flashed across Jia Lie Nu's face as he coldly smiled. Energy gushed uncontrollably from the spear in his hand.

Just as the long rod was about to strike his skull cap, the black-cloaked man slowly raised his head. The image of a delicate and pretty face was revealed under the sunlight was imprinted upon Jia Lie Nu's eyes.

"This... is that rascal from the Xiao Clan?"

Recognizing the familiar face, Jia Lie Nu's eyes narrowed and his killing intent grew immediately.

The long spear grew increasingly closer. Just as it was about to make contact, however, a white flame suddenly flowed from the black-cloaked man's body. Finally, it acted as a fire source and swept towards Jia Lie Nu, who was in midair.

The white flame flashed across the horizon and everyone felt a chill on their skin. Immediately, the wave, spear, and person.. disappeared.

On the road, the cheers were suddenly halted. The guards of the Jia Lie Clan, like a duck with its neck broken, widened their mouths and hyperventilated. The arrogance on their faces slowly transformed into fear. When their gaze once again fell on the black-cloaked man, the terror within was much like how one would look at a monster.

Scanning the guards indifferently, the black-cloaked man slowly extended his hand. A couple of white flames appeared. Jerking his finger, the flame shot forward and lightly fell on the carriages under the gazes of everyone.

"Boom!"

With a muffled blast, the horse carriages and the medicinal ingredients simultaneously caught fire and turned into ashes in front of everyone's dull gaze.

Chapter 94: Poor Foresight

"What? All the medicinal ingredients were destroyed by someone?" The furious roar within the large hall nearly caused the roof to collapse.

The trembling guard that knelt in front of Jia Lie Bi had a face filled with horror as he swallowed his own saliva. Quaking in fear, he said: "The second elder was also killed by the one who destroyed the medicine."

Jia Lie Bi's furious face suddenly froze. His face fell and legs felt weak as he collapsed backwards, onto the chair behind him. Jia Lie Nu was one of the three Da Dou Shi's of the Jia Lie clan. His death added to the turmoil that the Jia Lie Clan currently faced.

Seeing Jia Lie Bi's reaction, the face of the guard who delivered the message was also filled with distress. At that moment, his mind recalled the frightening strength of the black cloaked man. It was difficult to imagine that the second elder, a three star Da Dou Shi, would actually be burnt to ashes by the mysterious man. The frightening scene had given those present the true taste of fear.

"Who was the one who killed the second elder?" After a few minutes of silence, Jia Lie Bi finally began to gradually recover. His slightly hoarse voice revealed how big a blow Jia Lie Nu's death was for him.

"I have no idea. Back then, the man was wearing a black cloak so no one saw his face. But he could control some kind of white flame, which was also the flame the second elder perished under." The guard shook his head and replied softly.

"A black cloak? Controlling a white flame?" After a brief silence, Jia Lie Bi's face changed. Manipulating flames to hurt the enemy was the preference of an alchemist. And the only alchemist who had any enmity with the Jia Lie Clan and possess the strength to easily kill Jia Lie Nu... All of these criteria caused an image of the black cloaked alchemist he had accidentally met at the auction house to flash into his mind.

Recalling the respectful manner Ya Fei and Gu Ni showed towards the black cloaked alchemist, Jia Lie Bi suddenly felt a bitterness in his mouth.

They were wrong from the beginning. Back then, just because of a statement from Liu Xi, they had thought the Xiao Clan was simply lucky enough to hire a novice alchemist. However, the current situation told them that the alchemist of the Xiao Clan was much stronger than the incompetent Liu Xi.

Jia Lie Bi gently shook his head as malicious fury flashed across his eyes. The four hundred thousand gold coins worth of medicinal ingredients were destroyed and moreover, they still owed three hundred thousand gold coins to the medicinal ingredients supplier in Ta Lan City due to cash flow problems.

Jia Lie Bi had originally intended to refine this batch of medicinal ingredients into healing medicine and sell the medicine to repay the loan. With the latest development, all of his plans were ruined.

The medicinal supplier that worked with the Jia Lie clan had significant influence and strength in Ta Lan City. Once they knew that the medicinal supplies were destroyed, they would definitely send someone to collect their debt. However, with the coffers of the Jia Lie clan having been exhausted, how were they going to find such a large sum of money? If they failed to raise the money, then the Jia Lie Clan's reputation would be completely destroyed by this event.

"Damn!" Unable to think of a solution, Jia Lie Bi slammed his palm angrily into the table beside him. Immediately, the black wooden table was smashed into pieces and a wooden fragment hit the face of a guard standing by the side. The latter simply clenched his teeth and withstood it.

Taking a light breath, Jia Lie Bi forcefully suppressed the fury and malicious resentment towards the Xiao Clan in his heart. He shook his hand and purposefully acted calm as he said, "Distribute all the remaining healing medicine in the warehouse to all the marketplaces. One more thing. I want everyone to keep quiet about everything that has happened today. If anyone spreads this news, they will be punished in accordance with the clan rules."

"Yes." The guard's body trembled lightly before he respectfully gave a

reply. After which, he got up and quickly exited the hall.

Staring at the empty large hall, Jia Lie Bi tiredly leaned against the chair. This time, even if the Jia Lie Clan managed to survive, their strength would be greatly diminished. From then on, it would be difficult to fight with the Xiao Clan. Thinking of this, Jia Lie Bi sighed deeply. For some unknown reason, he was beginning to regret having started the conflict with the Xiao Clan back then...

However, this regret came a little too late.

.....

After settling a few other matters, Xiao Yan threw off his disguise and quickly returned to his clan. He requested Yao Lao to refine some Strength Recovering Pills before quickly delivering them to Xun Er. Seeing the girl caress the pills and her slightly red limpid eyes, Xiao Yan received a great boost to his confidence.

A few days after Xiao Yan destroyed the medicinal ingredients of the Jia Lie Clan, Wu Tan City continued to remain calm on the surface. However, the more observant people began to realize that the members of the Jia Lie Clan who had been causing trouble near the Xiao Clan's marketplace silently disappeared. Their usual arrogance had also diminished. In the face of the Jia Lie Clan's inexplicable actions, some people began to feel a little suspicious.

Xiao Clan's meeting room-

"What is the Jia Lie Clan trying to do these days? Are they trying to give us the impression of being weak?" After receiving various amounts of information in the past few days, Xiao Zhan narrowed his eyebrows as he spoke to the three elders in the hall. His face was filled with suspicion.

Exchanging looks with one another, the three elders shook their heads in unison. After a deep hum, the first elder slowly spoke, "This abnormality may not be that simple. Jia Lie Bi is a cunning man. He may well be carrying out some schemes; it is better to be cautious."

Xiao Zhan nodded his head. Naturally, as a prudent person, he would

not relax in the face of the Jia Lie Clan's actions.

Shifting his gaze, Xiao Zhan helplessly shook his head at Xiao Yan who was almost napping in his chair. . The rascal seemed unable to show any interest in clan matters.

"Yan Er, have you met with the esteemed elder recently?" Xiao Zhan randomly asked as he raised his tea cup to his mouth and took a sip.

TL: Er - an intimate form of address. Yan Er refers to Xiao Yan

Hearing Xiao Zhan's question, the three elders also shifted their gaze to Xiao Yan. That esteemed elder's importance to the Xiao Clan was understood even without saying. However, it appeared that only Xiao Yan in the entire Xiao Clan was favored. No other person had the opportunity to meet the esteemed elder alone.

Seeing how Xiao Yan got to enjoy such a privilege, everyone was filled with envy.

Lazily raising his eye lids, Xiao Yan said with a bored voice, "Hmm... I've seen him." After a brief silence, he continued, "He intends to take me as his disciple."

Upon hearing Xiao Yan's words, Xiao Zhan's hand which had lifted the tea cup froze. He lifted his face, which was filled with emotion and stared at the young man who had shrunk into his chair. Swallowing his saliva, he asked in disbelief, "Did you say that he wants to take you as his disciple?"

Raising his eyelids and watching Xiao Zhan's face fill with happiness and excitement, while the faces of the three elders grimaced with knitted brows, Xiao Yan nodded lazily.

"Good. Good. Good..." With a flushed face, Xiao Zhan emptied his tea cup in one go and excitedly stood up. He paced the room and rubbed his hands eagerly. "I knew that my son was not an ordinary person. Dammit, whoever dares to call my son 'cripple' in the future will be killed personally by me."

Watching Xiao Zhan's agitated manner, Xiao Yan could only helplessly shake his head and say softly, "In half a month, I will leave to train with

teacher. I'm afraid it will be over a year before I return."

"Ha?" Xiao Zhan was stunned. The smile on his face diminished as he raised his eyebrows and hesitatingly asked, "Are you not planning to take the entrance examination for the Jia Nan Academy? Jia Nan is a well known top academy across the whole Dou Qi continent. If you can enroll there, it would definitely benefit you."

"I will take entrance examination, but I may skip for one or two years." Xiao Yan rubbed his nose and smiled indifferently. "Although Jia Nan Academy is great, they cannot help me surpass Nalan Yan Ran in less than two years..."

TL: Nalan Yanran – Xiao Yan ex-fiancee; Nalan Su – Nalan Yanran's father

TL: Xiao Yan master skipper

Xiao Yan smiled as his gaze swept across the entire hall. Back then, that arrogant woman had crushed his remaining pride at this very place.

Hearing the name that was taboo to Xiao Yan, Xiao Zhan face trembled and he became silent.

Standing up, Xiao Yan lazily stretched his arms and cupped the back of his head as he slowly exited the large hall. The young man's faint laughter floated through in the large hall.

"Since I made a promise back then, I must keep my word and meet her. Haha, it is not that I wish for her to look at me in a better light, it is just that I want to tell her that her foresight is terrible when I finally meet her..."

Chapter 95: The Circumstances of the Jia Lie Clan

As the next few days slowly passed by, the amount of healing medicine that the Jia Lie Clan sold in their marketplace at Wu Tan City began to decrease. On the last day, when the last bottle of healing medicine was finally sold, the Jia Lie Clan members responsible for selling the medicine had little choice but to embarrassingly smile at the mercenaries jostling outside. “I’m very sorry. Due to a shortage of stock, our stall will be temporarily closed.”

The mercenaries who were squeezing for a better spot outside the stall became silent upon hearing those words. After glaring furiously at the stall workers for a long time, they began to start scolding angrily.

As the crowd dispersed, some of the less courteous customers verbally abused the medicine sellers.

The news that the Jia Lie clan had ceased the sales of healing medicine spread throughout the entire Wu Tan City in less than an hour. The first reaction of everyone was shock followed by some who gloated at their misfortune, some who felt regretful, and some who sighed...

Without the support of the healing medicine, the Jia Lie Clan, in the fight against the Xiao Clan, was totally defeated. Following their miserable defeat, the Jia Lie Clan was severely weakened and their influence within Wu Tan City was unlikely to ever recover to the high influential level that they had enjoyed in the past.

The Xiao Clan’s home, Meeting room.

“The Jia Lie Clan has lost the source of their healing medicine?” Hearing the news that his subordinate had brought him, Xiao Zhan was momentarily stunned before abruptly standing up. The happiness on his face was difficult to hide.

In his excitement, he exchanged glances with the three elders, only to find that their faces were also filled with uncontrolled happiness. Xiao

Zhan agitatedly took two steps in the hall. A while later, he finally suppressed his happiness and asked the messenger with a smile, “What about Liu Xi, their Alchemist?”

“I have no idea. Ever since that day when Jia Lie Ao and young master Xiao Yan fought, he was never seen again.”

Hearing this, Xiao Zhan and the three elders were surprised. They shifted their gaze stealthily at Xiao Yan, who was sitting in one corner.

“Why are you looking at me? This has nothing to do with me.” Seeing the four pairs of eyes looking at him, Xiao Yan rolled his eyes and innocently said.

Xiao Zhan helplessly shook his head. In any case, he did not believe Xiao Yan’s denial. Nothing to do with him? Then why was it that Liu Xi would vanish after having a conflict with him?

“That’s right. Clan leader, a member of the Jia Lie Clan inner circle accidentally leaked out that the Jia Lie Clan’s second elder, Jia Lie Nu, was killed by a black cloaked man when he was transporting medicinal ingredients.” After a brief hesitation, the messenger finally said in a low voice.

Xiao Zhan’s strolling legs suddenly froze. He drew his eyelids and nodded before waving his hand to dismiss the messenger. He stared intently at Xiao Yan and said with a wide smile, “Yan Er, I don’t think that there is anyone in the entire Wu Tan City who has the ability to kill the three star Da Dou Shi Jia Lie Nu other than your teacher.”

Xiao Yan rubbed his nose and sighed. He helplessly nodded his head. “Jia Lie Nu is indeed dead.”

Hearing the admission from Xiao Yan, Xiao Zhan also shook his head and sighed. The Jia Lie Clan, which had fought for decades with the Xiao Clan, had actually fell into a decline because of a single young man. This feeling... Xiao Zhan bitterly smiled and said, “I know that the reason for the esteemed elder to extend his help is because of you. Still, if there is time, please convey our Xiao Clan’s thanks. We owe him so much.”

Xiao Yan shrugged his shoulders and carelessly nodded his head.

"Now, let us see how the Jia Lie Clan tries to get out of this mess." Xiao Zhan laughed quietly. The gloating manner in his laughter was hard to hide. In the competition for the healing medicine market, the Jia Lie Clan had pulled out after a big loss and this huge loss had severely weakened the Jia Lie Clan while the Xiao Clan benefitted greatly.

In these short two months, the Xiao Clan had miraculously pulled themselves from their initial miserable position to win the competition. In addition, the two months of profit from the healing medicine was equivalent to their annual income from before. Moreover, their influence within Wu Tan City had obviously surpassed both the Jia Lie Clan and the Ao Ba Clan. Even the Primer Auction house had made gestures of goodwill because of Xiao Yan. With the accumulation of these factors, the Xiao Clan had the greatest spot in the limelight in the entire Wu Tan City.

Nevertheless, a centipede dies but never falls. Although the Jia Lie Clan had received a terrible blow, they were still a force that couldn't be underestimated. The armed forces that the clan had built up over the years was a force no one in Wu Tan City dared look down on.

The Jia Lie Clan was also well aware of the current influence of the Xiao Clan. Hence, after they knew that it was hopeless to continue to compete, they gathered their body like a poisonous snake and began licking their wounds, seemingly waiting for an opportunity to devastate their enemy.

However, the days that were occupied in such a manner did not last long. Two days after the Jia Lie Clan announced the ceasing of the sales of the healing medicine, the Ta Lan City medicinal supplier sent a group led by two Da Dou Shi. They aggressively entered the Jia Lie Clan family home and rudely demanded that Jie Lie Bi pay up the three hundred thousand gold coins owed to them within two days.

The action by the Ta Lan City medicinal ingredient supplier was equivalent to worsening the problem for Jia Lie Clan. At this moment, however, Jia Lie Bi did not dare to recklessly offend a party that was not weaker than the Jia Lie Clan regardless of how angry he was. Therefore, he

could only swallow his bitterness and attempt to raise money.

After searching all over the Jia Lie clan, however, they could only find a hundred thousand gold coins. This was a far cry from the debt they had.

Helplessly, Jia Lie Bi could only thicken his skin and attempt to borrow money from the powers which the Jia Lie Clan had better relationships with. However, there are far more people willing to share in your happiness than aid in your sorrow. Seeing the current pathetic state of the Jia Lie Clan and the hostility from the Xiao Clan, those powers which once had a good relationship with the Jia Lie Clan did not want to get involved in the mess.

Helping the Jia Lie Clan now would undoubtedly offend the rising Xiao Clan. As a result, even after putting in tremendous effort, Jia Lie Bi was unable to raise a sufficient amount of money.

With his face filled with gloominess, Jia Lie Bi returned home and raged like a war god. After which, he unwillingly voiced a shocking suggestion: Selling the marketplaces.

Jia Lie Clan had a total of three middle sized marketplaces and four small sized marketplaces in Wu Tan City. The ones that Jia Lie Bi intended to sell were two of the middle sized marketplaces with the best location and popularity.

Once these words were out, the members of the Jia Lie Clan reacted strongly. Even the entire Wu Tan City was in a state of shock. The revenue from these two marketplaces basically made up half of the income of the Jia Lie Clan. Being forced into selling their marketplaces showed just how desperate they had become.

If a marketplace had a sufficient crowd, it was a business venture that would definitely be profitable. However, there were only slightly more than ten marketplaces in the entire Wu Tan City. These marketplaces were usually controlled by both the Jia Lie Clan and the Xiao Clan. The Ao Ba Clan did not rely on a marketplace for a living. Instead, their income mainly comes from underground gambling dens and brothels. Therefore, after hearing that the Jie Lie Clan intended to sell the marketplace with

the best location, many people were tempted. However, after the initial fervor subsided, they became down heartened. In the current Wu Tan city, almost all of the crowds were dominated by the marketplaces of Xiao Clan. Other than the extremely profitable marketplaces of the Xiao Clan, all of the marketplaces could at best only break even. Buying the marketplace at this moment would undoubtedly be a bad business venture. More importantly, whoever bought the marketplaces of the Jia Lie Clan would definitely offend the Xiao Clan. Those who were slightly interested had little choice but to withdraw their interest with plenty of disappointment.

After announcing his intentions to sell the marketplaces, Jia Lie Bi, who had originally thought that there would be a surge of interest, once again tasted embarrassment. He had not expected that the current influence of the Xiao Clan had already reached such a great stage.

With the two day deadline drawing closer and the inability to raise the needed money, Jia Lie Bi began perspiring anxiously. Just as Jia Lie Bi became extremely anxious, a stranger appeared. After spending the entire afternoon discussing about the price, the marketplaces were finally bought by the stranger at a cheap price of two hundred thousand gold coins. In front of the Jia Lie Bi's extremely gloomy face accompanied by killing intent, the stranger swaggered out with two sales agreements, feeling extremely satisfied.

Upon receiving two hundred thousand gold coins as payment for the two marketplaces, the Jia Lie Clan finally managed to be rid of the group from the medicinal ingredient supplier. Seeing those bandit-like debt collectors leaving the courtyard, Jia Lie Bi felt like crying, though no tears came out.

Not long after sending off the debt collectors, a member of the clan came rushing over to report the latest news. The two marketplaces which they had sold in the morning were now under the name of the Xiao Clan. Hearing this news, the extremely furious Jia Lie Bi was stunned for a moment before finally coughing up blood and fainting.

Watching Jia Lie Bi being hurriedly carried into the room, all the members of the Jia Lie Clan let out a sigh. From then on, the Jia Lie Clan

was condemned to be a second rate power in Wu Tan City...

Chapter 96: Promise

The economic confrontation between the two families of Wu Tan City finally ended with the Xiao Clan's victory. Whereas the Jia Le Clan, as the defeated party, had their influence rapidly shrink. They would never be able to regain their former glory.

The confrontation between both clans stopped being a hotly contested topic in Wu Tan City after a week or so. People who loved the new and loathed the old, gradually shifted their attention away and started to place it on another important matter and this matter was regarding the enrollment of the Jia Nan Academy.

As one of Dou Qi Continent's most famous institutions of higher learning, Jia Nan Academy was almost a holy place in every teenager's heart. If they were able to graduate from it, their journey henceforth would be smooth sailing. Not only would they be able to proudly return home, they would also be fervently sought after by all parties.

Jia Nan Academy was located in the vicinity where Jia Ma Empire's borders intersected with two other large empires. In that no man's land, Jia Nan Academy was almost like a small country in itself. According to common sense, for this trapped force, the three empires would naturally not ignore it, as there was no assurance that someday this power would be roped by an opponent; which would result in a major threat to that side of the empire's defence.

Of course, this was under the condition that this force was weak, but if its prowess had already risen to be able to contest the three empires, the three empires had no choice but to stop their actions and leave Jia Nan Academy alone as if it was like a huge dragon coiling at the edge of their empire, and so no one would willingly provoke it.

After experiencing plenty of growth over many years. The current Jia Nan Academy was not only one of Dou Qi Continent's most famous institutions of higher learning, but also quite reputable between the citizens of the three empires due to kind of concealed cooperation

between it and the three empires.

For the incompatible three empires to smoothly maintain close to a century's peace between them, the Jia Nan Academy was a large factor in mediating and threatening them.

These many things caused Jia Nan Academy's reputation in the three empires to grow even stronger. In addition, every year, Jia Nan Academy would dispatch a large numbers of teachers to head into the three empires to recruit gifted students.

Towards Jia Nan Academy's act of sending teachers into the three empires to recruit students, the three royal families all expressed a high degree of approval. After all, an academy is ultimately not a sect. Academies do not have many restrictions and after graduation, a large portion of the graduates would choose to return to their own empire. This would be the new and powerful blood into the empire's strength, so as long as the royal families of the three empires had working brains, they would naturally agree.

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After another few days, the recruiting instructors of Jia Nan Academy were about to arrive at Wu Tan City. All of Wu Tan City's attention was shifted away from the matters of the two clans from about half a month ago into this new recruitment. This shift allowed the Xiao Clan which was constantly the topic of gossip to breathe a sigh of relief.

Jia Nan Academy's enrollment placed importance on talent and not on the person's background. Without sufficient talent, one would be hard pressed to enter the academy which signified a smooth future. Of course, nothing is for certain, if you were to have powerful backing, Jia Nan Academy would not mind taking you into the academy for a few years to collect a large sum of tuition.

Due to Jia Nan Academy's indifference regarding status and position, now in Wu Tan City, even the young beggars or thieves or whatnot, began to await the arrival of the teachers eagerly. If they were able to get past the tests, they would finally leave their degrading jobs which was looked down

upon by the public eye and henceforth become a respected Dou Zhe.

Under this driving mood, the recent atmosphere in Wu Tan City was even livelier than during the New Year and every day outside the city, there would be people eagerly gazing off into the distance with hope filled expressions.

Compared to these people with wholehearted expectations, Xiao Yan was extremely busy. Due to him having to travel soon, during this time period, he was almost always desperately making healing medicine. Looking at Xiao Yan's desperate figure, Yao Lao finally felt bad and decided to help him. With Yao Lao's unknown ability in alchemy's help, huge batches of medicine were completed and was constantly entering the vaults of the Xiao Clan. With this stored amount, as long as the Xiao Clan sold it periodically, they could sell for a year or longer. After the Xiao Clan finally sold all of this healing medicine, they would have already earned an envious sum of money.

This high degree of alchemy of course made Xiao Yan tired. However, the refining process also allowed his control of his inner Dou Qi to become more and more smooth. Even his control over the temperature of the flames became more skilled. This improvement, combined with his highly praised soul perception, made Xiao Yan's success rate in making blood clotting medicine almost close to sixty percent. Such a high success rate, would be something only an experienced second tier alchemist could accomplish.

Comparable to his improvement in alchemy, Xiao Yan's own strength, under the help of Yao Lao's carefully made elixirs, was also slowly and steadily increasing. After Xiao Yan's last completion of a batch of medicine, the Dou Qi collected inside his body and forced itself to breakthrough and land Xiao Yan among the ranks of a four star Dou Zhe.

Xiao Yan was very delighted by this unexpected gain. Looking at this, the high intensity of alchemy had quite the reinforcement effect on raising one's strength.

Of course, although alchemy had some reinforcement effects, it was very

taxing on energy and once the last batch of elixirs were completed, Yao Lao immediately stopped Xiao Yan. Seeing Yao Lao's severe expression, Xiao Yan considered the fact that the storage was sufficient and decided to stop. He then went to his room and tiredly slept for a day as his daily life became more relaxed again.

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Slowly walking in his clan, gazing at the suddenly squeezed practice grounds, Xiao Yan was a little bored.

In each field, many young clan members were toiling away at training. These people were hoping that these last days worth of effort were enough to let themselves achieve Jia Nan Academy's enrollment criteria.

Standing at the edge of the practice ground, Xiao Yan lazily looked at a few fields, then with a bored expression, turned and left. For these procrastinators, he didn't have much compassion. Although he initially regained his talent, he also had to work like a dog to keep improving. These people, without much talent, always depended on their clan's background to philander which didn't settle well with Xiao Yan.

Jia Nan Academy's enrollment baseline was not low: before the age of eighteen, one had to achieve 8 Duan Qi. This slightly stringent criteria alone had destroyed many people's dreams. Of course, with Xiao Yan's view, there would only be two people on this practice ground that could meet this criteria.

Both hands holding the back of his head, Xiao Yan threw these clansmen out of his mind since how many people being enrolled was none of his business. Shaking his head, Xiao Yan entered another small path, walking into the flower gardens in the backyard. A familiar female figure, was prettily sitting amongst the flowers, appearing very beautiful.

Slightly narrowing his eyes gazing at that perfectly curved back, a gentle look appeared on Xiao Yan's face. Lightly smiling, he slowly walked toward the green clothed girl that was staring at the willow tree in a daze.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge, you... you are leaving soon?" Before reaching the young girl, a slightly sad voice entered Xiao Yan's ears.

His footsteps stopping briefly, Xiao Yan powerlessly nodded his head and slowly walked forward to stand beside Xun Er. Turning his head, he saw that slightly dejected exquisite face. Lightly smiling, he reached out his hand and patted Xun Er's small head before having his hand quietly sliding down her soft hair. The comfortable feeling made him feel a little enchanted.

"You aren't going to Jia Nan Academy anymore?" Letting Xiao Yan intimately play with her hair which no other male had ever touched, Xun Er softly asked.

"Un." Nodding his head, Xiao Yan gently laughed, "I also have my own things that I definitely must do."

"Nalan Yanran?" Xun Er lightly bit her lips as she said in a low voice with her watery eyes throbbing with a kind of inexplicable coldness.

The palm that was playing with her hair briefly stopped, Xiao Yan shrugged, faintly laughed and said, "That promise that was set in front of so many people, I can't miss it right? If that was the case, even you would despise me."

Xun Er's brow lightly knitted, softly sighed and then using a voice that only she could hear muttered, "I really shouldn't have let her live back then."

"Haha, rest assured, after this matter is finished, I will go to Jia Nan Academy to find Xun Er. Uh... at most a year and a half,. Wait no, just a year...." Looking at Xun Er's face that had suddenly became bitter, Xiao Yan promptly laughed and changed his words.

"Xiao Yan ge-ge, actually.... If you follow Xun Er, Xun Er also has a plan to let you be able to defeat Nalan Yanran within the promised time." Biting her lips after thinking for a while, Xun Er suddenly hesitantly spoke.

Bitterly laughing, Xiao Yan shook his head and self deprecatingly sighed, "This girl sometimes says some words that make me feel a little ashamed."

"I know Xiao Yan ge-ge won't think that this is charity." Xun Er sweetly smiled and said.

Softly smiling, Xiao Yan lightly shook his head. He breathed out in consternation and laughingly said, “ Rest assured, I have confidence that after a year, I will ascend to Misty Cloud Faction and battle Nalan Yanran.”

Gazing at Xiao Yan who suddenly became prideful, Xun Er helplessly shook her head and was about to persuade him one more time, when Xiao Yan suddenly turned over, extended his arms, and in a split moment, grabbed Xun Er’s small waist, roughly pulling her into his embrace.

A gentle wind blew across the flower garden, the willow lightly floated, a young man tightly hugging a young girl like they would never split apart.

Xiao Yan’s sudden action scared Xun Er and after brief moment, Xun Er’s soft ear tips turned bright red. Lightly struggling for a while then shyly stopping, her small face was slightly suffused with an enticing layer of blushing red.

“Xun Er, after a year, I will go to Jia Nan Academy to find you, wait for me.”

Burying his head in that soft hair, the young man’s promise, finally let the girl, who was at a loss, to obediently nod her head.

Chapter 97: Xue Ni

Walking on a small street and observing the clan that had become much emptier, Xiao Yan shook his head helplessly. Today was the day that the recruitment team from Jia Nan Academy would arrive at Wu Tan City and thus almost half of the clan members had gone to watch. By now, the entrance to Wu Tan City would likely be entirely blocked by people.

“What a bunch of insane people. Did you think that they would easily let you pass the entrance examination just because you went to look?” Xiao Yan shook his head and whispered. In a relaxed manner as he headed towards the mountains. At this time everyday, he would train his Dou Technique without fail.

Although the recruitment team this time stayed in Wu Tan City, the territories that they were responsible of included other nearby cities. Thus, when Xiao Yan and his group rushed to the recruitment location on the next day and saw the seemingly never ending queue, they could not help but be stunned.

In the huge plaza, there were continuous noises and disturbances. Countless young people were struggling to head into the interior of the plaza. Were it not for the soldiers from the governor’s barracks maintaining order at the edge of the plaza, the agitated crowd would have desperately rushed in.

After staring in shock at the sea of people for a long while, Xiao Yan sighed lightly. His face was dispirited as he shook his head. From the looks of things, it seemed he could forget about passing the entrance examination today.

“Hum. There’s nothing you can do right?” Looking at Xiao Yan’s dispirited manner, Xiao Yu who was having a conversation with Xun Er behind him, immediately said in a pleased voice.

Rolling his eyes, Xiao Yan ignored her. “Does Xiao Yu biao-jie have a solution?” Seeing that the pair was about to argue, Xun Er, who was standing beside them, quickly changed the conversation topic.

“The one who is in charge of the recruitment team in Wu Tan City is my teacher. Naturally, as her favorite pupil, I have a solution.” Xiao Yu raised her nose and laughed as she waved her hand. “Follow me.”

Watching Xiao Yu raise her sexy long legs and head towards the other side of the plaza, Xiao Yan looked at Xun Er and helplessly pushed his hands away. “Forget it. I will not argue with her.”

Hearing this , Xun Er smiled and nodded as she and Xiao Yan followed Xiao Yu.

The few of them followed Xiao Yu and rounded around the huge plaza before they came to a stop at the western side, where the back of the plaza was. Here, there were fully equipped soldiers who formed two to three layers around the place. Their weapons carried a cold glint which under the hot sun, reflected the piercing rays.

Scanning the tightly guarded formation, Xiao Yu issued some orders to Xiao Yan before moving forward by herself. She took out a piece of green identification card and spoke for a long while to someone who appeared to be an officer. Only after that did she wave for Xiao Yan and his group to come over.

The middle aged officer’s cold gaze swept over Xiao Yan and his companions. Only after a while did he wave his hand and order, “Let them through!”

Upon hearing the order from the middle aged office, an ordered sound of metal rubbing against another was immediately emitted from the tight wall of armored men and slowly, a small path appeared. Xiao Yu smiled at the middle aged officer as she took back her green plate. After lifting her chin at Xiao Yan and group, she followed the middle aged officer and led the group in.

Following behind Xiao Yu, the other members from Xian Clan also entered this path. Just as they entered, the group could feel a coldness on their skin. The surrounding expressionless soldiers were emitting a scent of blood from their bodies, causing the group, who had never experienced such a formation, to feel an intense pressure that made it difficult to

breath.

"These are soldiers who have survived real wars?" Xiao Yan gradually let out a breath. Xiao Yan's extraordinary will allowed him to slowly drive out the pressure. Licking his lips, his weakened legs suddenly felt strong once more. Regardless of how you put it, with his strength as a four star Dou Zhe, he was stronger than most of the soldiers present. He might not be able to compete in terms of bloody auras, but at the very least, he would not embarrass himself for that reason.

The short, less than twenty meter distance felt like a hundred or thousand meters to the few of them. When they finally took their final step, all of them found that their palms were sweaty..

With her slightly pale face. Xiao Yu faced the middle aged officer and smiled bitterly: "Senior Ke, did you purposely torture us?"

"Haha, this was what Teacher Ruo Lin ordered. If you want to take the back door, it is only natural to have to go through a little test. All of you are quite good. These subordinates of mine have all hugged a corpse to sleep. If you did not have a strong inner strength, you would have been paralysed with fear halfway through." The middle aged officer face revealed a smile as his gaze swept across Xiao Yu and those around her. Finally seeing on the calm faces of Xun Er and Xiao Yan, astonishment filled his eyes. "It seems that Teacher Ruo Lin will be able to recruit some good students this time."

TL: Back door means unofficial aka somewhat cheating

Hugged a corpse to sleep = Seen death, and a lot of it

Waving at the middle aged officer in a less than good mood, Xiao Yu pulled Xiao Mei and Xiao Ning, whose legs had already weakened, and walked swiftly into the interior of the plaza.

Once they were in the middle of the plaza, their eyes caught sight of a large green tent. From there, Xiao Yan and the others could already see the sea of people outside. On the pathway, there were occasionally some people who had passed the entrance test and were happily heading towards the interior of the plaza.

“Yu Er!” Just as they began walking near the huge tent, a female’s laugh rang out. A red figure rushed over and happily hugged Xiao Yu. Her palms touched Xiao Yu’s waist as she jokingly said, “Have you grown fatter?”

TL: Yu er – an intimate form of address. Refers to Xiao Yu.

“You lewd girl. Get off me.” Scolding with a smile, Xiao Yu pushed the girl off. Following that, she turned around to faced Xiao Yan and the others as she made the introductions with a smile. “This is my best friend in the Jia Nan Academy. She’s called Xue Ni and is a four star Dou Zhe.”

Hearing this, Xiao Yan and the others shifted their gaze to the lady in red. A radiant smile could be seen on her slightly pretty face and her brown hair was carelessly tied into a ponytail. She had a full blossom, a very slender waist along with a round bottom. Although she was not as pretty as Xiao Yu, her sexy devilish figure was something from every man’s dream. During the short period of introduction, Xiao Yan had realised that many of the young men who had passed the test were stealthily and obscenely gazing at the two woman.

Xiao Yu affectionately held Xue Ni. From her expression, it was obvious they enjoyed a good relationship.

“They are members of my clan. This is Xun Er, heh heh, beautiful, isn’t she? But you are not allowed to have any intentions towards her, she will not show any interest in you. This is Xiao Mei, another beauty. This is my younger brother Xiao Ning. Finally this is...” When her eyes landed on the lazy looking Xiao Yan, Xiao Yu slanted her head and pulled the ears of the girl called Xue Ni and whispered, “He’s Xiao Yan, the one whom I have mentioned to you before.”

At first, Xue Ni glanced at both Xun Er and Xiao Mei. Widening her eyes, she gasped, “Wow. Your clan really does have quite a number of beauties. Once they enter Jia Nan Academy, all of the males will be utterly smitten.”

“Eh? Xiao Yan?” After a shocked gasp, Xue Ni suddenly stilled as she watched Xiao Yan with a stunned expression. “Is this the one whom you said... the cousin who remained at 3 Duan Qi? Looks quite handsome.”

“Ah?” The corner of Xiao Yu’s mouth twitched as she ruthlessly pinched

the big-mouthed woman beside her. Seeing the terrible expression on Xiao Yan's face, she embarrassingly tried to explain, "I did not go around talking about you. It is just that these sharp ears of hers picked up what I said when I was sleep talking."

Raising his eyebrows, Xiao Yan curled his mouth and touched his face as he mocked: "You are thinking of me even in your dreams? Since when has our relationship been this good? Back then, all I did was touch..."

"Shut up." Hearing Xiao Yan's words, Xiao Yu's face was filled with embarrassment. The sexy long legs of hers ruthlessly kicked at Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan shifted his body smoothly to avoid it. After getting back at her, he waved his hands and stopped his teasing.

"What did you touch? It can't be Yu Er, can it?" Xue Ni's face was filled with curiosity as she was ruthlessly pinched by Xiao Yu.

"Yu Er, how cruel of you. You actually attacked your old friend.." Covering her reddened wrist, Xue Ni watched Xiao Yu with a pair of watery eyes.

"Stop fooling around. We still need to bring them to take the test." Xiao Yu scolded as she pushed away the living treasure, not knowing to cry or smile.

"Hehe, let's go. Follow me. I will lead the way." Xue Ni changed her face and withdrew the tears from her eyes. She turned around and was about to take the first step when she tilted her head and said, "Oh, right. I forgot to tell you that Luo Bu is in this recruitment party. Moreover, on the journey here, I heard that he had risen to a four star Dou Zhe."

Hearing this, the smiling face of Xiao Yu's became gloomy and she impatiently said, "Why did that irritating guy come?"

"Isn't it because of the beautiful Xiao Yu in front of us? On the way here, he only had thoughts of you." Xue Ni jokingly said.

Xiao Yu clenched her teeth a couple of times. For a while, her expression changed irregularly before she suddenly turned around and stared at Xiao Yan.

“What are you looking at me for? You can forget about getting me to act intimate with you in front of that guy. I am not interested in you and have no intention of feigning interest.” Seeing the glint in Xiao Yu’s eyes and given his intelligence, how could Xiao Yan not guess what that girl was thinking? He simply laughed coldly and ignored the angry gaze as he swaggered toward the large tent.

“Uh... Yu Er. it seems that your charm has diminished... In the face of such a good thing, the students in our school would have fought desperately for it. But that little boy actually ignored you?” Watching Xiao Yan’s back, Xue Ni said incredulously.

Tightly clenching her teeth, Xiao Yu irritably said, “ This little rascal is a freak. How can you use logic to try and understand him? Other than that vamp in the academy, have you seen anyone else who could improve from having 3 Duan Qi to being a three star Dou Zhe in just one year?”

Hearing this, Xue Ni’s mouth opened. Her cheeky expression was finally overcome by shock. She had not expected that the delicate and handsome looking young man to possess such talent. Was this still the same person as the clan’s “cripple” that Xiao Yu had told her about earlier?

Chapter 98: Making Things Difficult

Xiao Yan slowly made his way towards the large tent. Xiao Yu was behind him, angrily glaring at his back, clenching her teeth. She had not expected that Xiao Yan would decline her offer and not give her any face.

As the group got closer to the large green tent, they found over ten people gathered in its shade. They were split up into a few small circles and talking. Based on their relaxed expressions, one would probably say they were all students from the same academy as Xue Ni, Jia Nan Academy.

Outside of the tent's cool shade, over twenty young men and women were sitting on the ground under the hot sun. Although the heat caused them to perspire unceasingly, their expressions stayed timid. On first glance, it seemed that they were the new students who had just passed the entrance examination outside.

A couple of chattering females in the tent suddenly raised their heads and saw Xiao Yu with her group walking towards them. The students faces instantly brightened at the sight and they quickly rushed over with unceasing laughter to surround Xiao Yu.

Xiao Yan felt his head swell at the sudden assault of loud noises, he was not ready for the loud clamouring of adolescent girls. His gaze swept across these young and pretty female students. From their surprised expressions, Xiao Yan realized that Xiao Yu's relationships in the academy seemed to be quite good.

"Aya! Please, all of you, can you be more reserved?" Xiao Yu helplessly said. She didn't know whether to laugh or cry as she was forced to push away a couple of friends who were continuously throwing themselves on her.

"Yu Er, I haven't seen you in two months and it seems you have become more shapely in my absence. Be honest, did you... ah?" A female with a beautiful face secretly swept her hand on Xiao Yu's chest before resting it on her shoulder as she joked.

At the side, Xiao Yan helplessly sighed and gave Xiao Yu a strange look. Why was it that all these friends of hers were like female leechers?

“Get lost, you lewd girl. Don’t act so unrestrained toward me.” Blushing, Xiao Yu pushed off the girl from her chest. When she saw that there were other girls attempting to pounce on her, she quickly took a step back, pointed at Xiao Yan and group and hurriedly introduced them. Thankfully, this move successfully rid the girls of their teasing intentions.

“Hehe, what beautiful girls.” After the gazes swept across Xun Er and Xiao Mei, their great beauty caused these female students to sigh in surprise.

Their gazes gradually turned toward Xiao Yan. As for Xiao Ning, he was luckily overlooked by these females due to his sibling relationship with Xiao Yu.

Although Xiao Yan was younger than Xiao Yu by two to three years, his size could easily be compared to Xiao Yu’s after over a year of tough training. His face may have appeared a little young and delicate, but he carried a maturity that did not match his age. This visual contradiction caused the females to helplessly take another look.

“Hee hee, what a handsome young man. Yu Er, is he your cousin? Blood-related cousin? Be honest. Did you steal him for yourself.”

Regardless of how calm Xiao Yan was, upon hearing these ladies openly asking such a valiant question in front of the parties involved, the corner of his mouth could not help but twitch. The gaze that he used on Xiao Yu grew increasingly strange.

After hearing the teasing of these girls, Xiao Yu’s face showed both embarrassment and helplessness. She was about to explain when the corner of her eye caught a male figure striding over.

Xiao Yu’s face changed and frowned. Immediately, a flustered red appeared on her face as she flirtatiously said, “I don’t have any blood relation with him. Why don’t you stop making fun of him. He has been shy since he was young.”

“Uh...” Hearing those words, all the female students were stunned. Watching a flustered looking Xiao Yu that they have never seen before, they began exchanging looks with one another. Originally they had only intended to joke around; they did not expect that Xiao Yu would actually seriously come forth and explain. Moreover, the tone she used... it was like half attempting to lie.

Even Xun Er and those following Xiao Yu were also stunned by Xiao Yu’s intimate tone. They exchanged glances as they all saw each other’s eyes foggy. Since when had the relationship between Xiao Yu and Xiao Yan become so good?

TL: Eyes foggy = confused

Standing on one side, Xiao Yan coldly stared at Xiao Yu’s acting. He was about to expose her when Xiao Yu quickly extended her hands. One of them locked onto his hand while the other intimately swept off the dust from Xiao Yan’s clothes.

“Ah...” Seeing Xiao Yu’s sudden action, those surrounding her were all totally shocked. When had they ever witnessed Xiao Yu treat another man in such a manner?

“Xiao Yu, you... long time no see.” Just as everyone was in a daze, a male’s voice abruptly called out.

Hearing the voice, everyone tilted their heads. A young man in grey was standing at their backs, smiling widely at them. The young man was quite handsome, but that radiant smile appeared false to Xiao Yan and the others.

The flustered look on Xiao Yu face slowly receded. Turning around with her hand still holding Xiao Yan, she glanced at the young man and indifferently said, “Luo Bu, long time no see.”

“Ke ke.” Nodding his head and laughing, the young man called Luo Bu randomly looked at the interlocked hands. Instantly, a coldness and fury flashed across the gaze he sent to Xiao Yan.

“Ke ke, you must have brought over these few people, no?” Luo Bu asked

with a smile as he stepped toward them.

“Yes.” Carelessly nodding her head Xiao Yu once again introduced Xiao Yan and the others. She said with a smile, “I have brought them here to take the test.”

“Oh, have you now?” Nodding his head with a smile, Luo Bu pulled out a fist sized red crystal ball. He waved it and said with a smile, “It so happens that Teacher Ruo Ling has just given me an examination crystal. Why don’t we let them try. The other examination crystals have all been brought to the examination gateway at the front. If you don’t use mine, you will have to wait for some time.”

Hearing this, Xiao Yu hesitated a little before nodding her head. She slanted her head and softly explained to Xiao Yan, “This examination crystal is very simple. As long as your strength has reached the a Dou Qi of the 8 Duan, it will light up. Once that happens, you will have passed the initial test.”

“Let me go.” Xiao Yan unruly stared at her and indifferently ordered.

“Uh.” Xiao Yu smilingly nodded her head and obediently released her hands. Seeing her obedient manner, the grip of the one called Luo Bo tightened on the crystal ball.

“Xun Er, why don’t all of you go first.” Rubbing his reddened wrist that Xiao Yu had grabbed, Xiao Yan told Xun Er with a smile.

Nodding with a smile, Xun Er, Xiao Mei and Xiao Ning took the lead and went forward. Soon after their palms touched the crystal ball, it lit up and they stepped back.

Seeing the three of them succeeding, Xiao Yan also went forward and carelessly touched the crystal ball, obtaining the same result.

“Rest assured that if they did not have the ability to pass the test, I would not have acted on my own and brought them in here.” Watching the success of the four people, Xiao Yu said indifferently.

“Ke ke. It is not that I don’t trust you but this is the rule.” Giving Xiao Yu an apologetic smile, Luo Bu kept the crystal ball. His finger pointed

towards those outside, who were sitting under the sun. Facing Xiao Yan and group, he said with a smile, “Congratulations on passing the initial test. Now, please sit outside for half an hour.”

“Luo Bu, what is the meaning of this?” Hearing Luo Bu words, Xiao Yu frowned and asked with iciness.

“Xiao Yu, you are also a student here. You ought to know that this is a rule during recruitment. Ke ke, The new students these days are getting more and more impulsive. Wearing down their spirit during the recruitment would benefit their future life at the academy.” Luo Bu explained with a smile.

“Hmph. Luo Bu, I am not interested in whatever you tell the new students but you shall not impose these lousy rules on the people I have brought over.” Xiao Yu icily said.

“This is the rule.”

The corner of Lu Bu’s mouth twitched. Being publicly rebuked by Xiao Yu without consideration of his reputation had contributed to the anger and sourness within him.

“Luo Bu, you should stop creating trouble. You know very well that these are rules that can be done without so why do you want to make a big fuss out of it?” The surrounding girls frowned as they were also unable to bear how Luo Bu was trying to make a big fuss over nothing.

“Ke ke. I’m sorry. They had passed the test on my watch. Based on the rules, during this time period, I am in charge of them.” Luo Bu smiled radiantly. Seeing the furious Xiao Yu, he suddenly changed his words. “Alright. Because it’s you, not all of them will need to go out. Why don’t we let someone be a representative? Uh... let me see. We shall let...let this boy be the representative. Ke ke, he’s a man, so there’s no need for him to worry about turning darker under the sun.” After slowly moving his finger across the few new students, he finally smiled and stopped in front of Xiao Yan.

Xiao Yan widened his eyes and indifferently watched the young man in front of him who was full of smiles.

“Get lost. Xiao Yan will also not leave. I will personally look for Teacher Ruo Ling to talk about this. There is no need for you to be here giving orders!” With a stride of her long sexy legs, Xiao Yu stood in front of Xiao Yan and coldly said.

“Oh ah, Luo Bu Da-ge, it seems that you are having some problems.” Just as they were in a constant entanglement, a group of laughing men appeared from the shadow of the tent.

TL: Da-ge – means big brother

“It’s nothing other than this new student being unwilling to be under the sun.” Luo Bo secured his crystal ball as he said offhandedly.

“Heh, it has been a long time since I’ve seen such an arrogant new student. Luo Bu Da-ge, do you need our help?” Hearing this, a young man with one golden star on his chest quietly smiled at Luo Bu. His smile was filled with an attempt to curry favor.

Smiling and nodding his head, Luo Bu faced the gloomy faced Xiao Yu and mused. Suddenly, he smiled and said, “Why don’t we do this. It is alright not to go out, but there are many new students out there watching. If only these few students are exempted from being under the sun, the others may not be happy about it.”

As he spoke, Luo Bu patted the shoulders of the young man beside him and smiled at Xiao Yan. “Since you do not wish to go out, why don’t you spar with Ge La here. Of course, you need not defeat him. All you need is to endure for twenty rounds under him.”

Hearing this, the ladies by Xiao Yu’s side immediately angrily scolded Luo Bu. After seeing the situation, they had finally understood that this guy was jealous of Xiao Yan and was trying to abuse his authority to punish Xiao Yan for a personal grudge.

Compared to the angry cries of those around her, Xiao Yu had strangely become quiet. Tilting her head and watching Xiao Yan, she clearly understood that Xiao Yan’s current strength was not weaker than hers. Dealing with a one star Dou Zhe was not something difficult.

Ignoring Xiao Yu's gaze, Xiao Yan indifferently stared at the radiantly smiling Luo Bu. A coldness filled his black eyes. Originally, he had not wanted to be meddlesome but this guy just had to force his hand.

"Heh heh, come. Little boy, let me teach you how to respect your seniors. Otherwise, when you suffer at the academy in the future, you would blame us." The young man called Ge La stepped forward and smiled at Xiao Yan with ill intentions.

Gradually letting his breath out, Xiao Yan simply shrugged his shoulders in front of everyone's gaze. He took two steps forward. When he was by Xiao Yu's side, he abruptly extended his arm and ruthlessly grabbed her soft narrow waist and pulled her into an embrace.

Faced with Xiao Yan's sudden surprise attack, Xiao Yu was momentarily stunned before her entire face flamed. Considering that Luo Bu was nearby, she could only cease her struggle and clench her teeth as she repeatedly cursed this guy who publicly took advantage of her.

Xiao Yan's action caused all the females around them to be totally stunned. It also caused Luo Bu's face to immediately become dark. He slanted his head and coldly told Ge La, "Be more ruthless when you attack."

Hearing this, Ge La smiled sinisterly and nodded,

At the side, Xun Er and the two others could only helplessly shake their head at the strange action.

"This is interesting." Xiao Yan coldly whispered as his hand caressed Xiao Yu's waist twice more, seemingly reluctant to leave.

After saying that, Xiao Yan released his hand without another glance at Xiao Yu's beet-red face. He stretched his neck while holding a smile at the edge of his mouth and slowly walked toward Ge La who was staring at him sinisterly.

Chapter 99: Threaten

Watching Xiao Yan stroll over, Ge La smiled coldly. He had seen many such new students who had stood out, but none of them had a good ending. Wearing down the spirit of new students during their recruitment was an unofficial tradition in Jia Nan Academy. Those who possessed the qualification to be recruited usually had quite a lot of talent. These people were also usually pampered within their home and seldom met with any mocking or taunting. Carrying this kind of attitude and entering Jia Nan Academy which was filled with outstanding individuals would easily result in fights breaking out because of verbal disputes. At the end, this would only cause unnecessary trouble. Hence, when recruiting new students, it was important to let the new students clearly understand their ability and wear down their arrogance and spirit.

When faced with this unofficial rule, even the teachers of the Jia Nan Academy did not raise any objections. Thus, this rule continued to be passed down over the generations.

Tightening his fist and allowing his faint Dou Qi to enshroud over it, Ge La smiled coldly. Back when he first joined the Jia Nan Academy, he had also resisted with his talent. However, a two star Dou Zhe senior had only used one punch before he sensibly ran out to stand under the blazing sun for half an hour. This personal humiliation had further increased his desire to grind down the spirit of each new student he saw.

Under the watchful eyes of the surrounding people, the young man finally stopped right in front of Ge La.

“Yu Er, why are you not stopping him? Being under the sun is much better than suffering physical injuries.” Seeing the sinister smile of Ge La, the girls beside Xiao Yu somewhat unwillingly blamed her.

Standing beside Xiao Yu, Xue Ni recalled the appraisal Xiao Yu had of Xiao Yan and her clear eyes blinked. Curiously, she stared at the young man who had continued smiling faintly. She wanted to know whether Xiao Yu was right and that this young man called Xiao Yan really had a talent

comparable to that Witch.

Closing her red lips tightly, Xue Ni placed her hands in front of her chest while anticipation flashed across her eyes.

With the redness on her face yet to subside, Xiao Yu appeared extremely attractive. She lazily stretched her arm and then pushed aside the black hair in front of her forehead. As she stared at the young man's back, she said in an offhanded whisper, "It is difficult to say who's going to suffer."

Watching the two men in the tent who were about to start fighting, the twenty plus new students under the sun curiously directed their gaze at them. Before choosing to be under the sun, they had also attempted to retaliate but those retaliations were all easily forcefully suppressed by their much stronger seniors. Seeing another who wanted to challenge the strength of these seniors, they began to gloat at his misfortune as they got ready to observe how he would embarrass himself.

"Are you ready?"

Enjoying being the focus of everyone's attention, the smile on Ge La's face grew richer. His small eyes glanced at Xiao Yan and spoke with a smile.

"Begin." Xiao Yan simply scratched his chin quietly, causing everyone to be stunned.

"Heh heh, Little boy. Your mentality is not bad." Faced with Xiao Yan's attitude, Ge Le was a little surprised. Immediately, he felt an anger from within. Was this an attempt at discriminating against him?

Lightly releasing his breath, Xiao Yan did not bother to say any nonsense. He simply lazily stared at the somewhat angry face of his opponent.

"Very good!"

The calm of his opponent had hurt Ge La's pride. With a cold smile, he furiously rushed forward with his right fist clenched and Dou Qi agglomerating on it. Immediately, the fist, along with the accompanying wind ruthlessly bombarded toward Xiao Yan's head.

The surrounding audience, upon seeing Ge La use such a great force against a new student, frowned.

Gently lifting his eyelids and watching the large fist rushing at him, Xiao Yan shook his head. He raised his palm where the fist was about to strike and halted Ge La's fist.

After halting the fist, his palm did not even make the slightest movement. The punch which had a huge amount of energy and strength did not even raise the slightest reaction, much like punching air.

"Speed, slow! Strength, weak! Are you really a student from Jia Nan Academy?" Lifting his face, Xiao Yan shook his head and whispered.

The ridicule in the young man's whisper caused the surrounding people to become dumbfounded. One by one, astonished gazes stared at the spot where the fist and palm made contact. It was difficult to imagine that a new student would be able to easily block an attack from a one star Dou Zhe.

Luo Bu, who was originally full of smiles, gradually turned gloomy as he watched this scene. His gaze was filled with coldness as he watched the young man who was smiling faintly. It seemed that he had made a mistake. Had he known, he would have let someone who was stronger enter the fight.

"Bastard! Do you want to die?"

Being publicly ridiculed by a new student, Ge La's face had turned completely red as he bellowed. His right leg aimed at Xiao Yan's lower abdomen and violently kicked.

With an indifferent face, Xiao Yan's lazily swung his unused left hand as one would do to a fly. Finally, with a snapping sound, he hit Ga Le's ankle; a bruise instantly appeared.

"Hiss."

An intense pain was emitted from the ankle, causing Ge La to breath in a mouthful of cold air. The fury on his face became even wilder. Quickly retreating a step, he broke away from Xiao Yan's palm. His right leg

stepped off the ground and borrowed the force to rise high into the air. Spinning abruptly, a pale green Dou Qi appeared on his right leg. A wind blade like imaginary light covered his leg before it ruthlessly cut towards Xiao Yan's skull cap.

"Shameless. To even use the 'Wind-Light Edge'. This is a High Huang Dou Skill. This guy is far too shameless." Watching the blurry light blade on Ge La's leg, the group of female students, whose face were filled with anger, yelled furiously.

Seeing Ge La's action, Xiao Yu's eyebrow creased slightly only to relax soon after. Back then, even after using a High Xuan Dou Skill, Jia Lie Ao's hands were still crippled by Xiao Yan. She did not believe that with just the strength of a one star Dou Zhe, this guy could do any significant harm to Xiao Yan.

Lifting his face, the somewhat sharp wind caused Xiao Yan's face to shudder slightly. Slowly lifting his palm, he aimed at the descending Ge La.

"Scram!" Moving his lips, the faint voice shouted.

As the shout died down, a ferocious and shapeless force came rushing forth from Xiao Yan's palm and ruthlessly landed on the chest of the descending Ge La.

"Puff!"

As his chest suffered an unknown heavy blow, the cold face of Ge La immediately turned white. A moment later, his body was pushed backwards as he spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Bang!"

After his body was thrown back by more than ten meters, it landed heavily on a rock that had been baked under the hot sun. Ge La's body slightly twitched as his terrified face watched the young man who was standing a distance away with his palm still stretched out. His chest felt then stuffy and his vision became black as he finally fainted.

The time between Ge La's powerful attack till the time he was thrown

back without any apparent reason was only slightly more than ten seconds.

Seeing how the victory was decided in such a short time, the people both within and outside the camp harmoniously kept silent.

Under the hot sun, the new students foolishly stared at Ge La who had fainted near them. Moments later, their fervent gaze shifted towards the young man standing under the shade. This was the first time they had witnessed a freshman defeating a senior. Moreover, this new student seemed to be slightly younger than them.

The prettier young ladies amongst the new student gazed passionately at the black clothed young man who wore an indifferent face. Their eyes were filled with a worshipful glint. Was it not for the inappropriate atmosphere, they might have screeched once or twice to vent their worshipful feelings.

“Certainly... a terrifying talent.” Staring intently at Xiao Yan, Xue Ni let out a shocked sigh and shook her head. Xiao Yan’s strength had proven that what Xiao Yu had said earlier was the truth.

“Yu... Yu er. This person from your family, what exactly is the level of his strength. From the looks of it, it seems he has already become a Dou Zhe, right?” While staring dumbly at the young man in black, the girls beside Xiao Yu abruptly asked with a stammer.

What a joke. Being able to easily beat up a one star Dou Zhe to such an extent, his strength was already greater than most of the people here.

Xiao Yu smiled sweetly as she stared intently at the young man standing on the spot where the fight had taken place. An unknown radiance flashed across her eyes. A moment later, she copied Xiao Yan’s manner and waved her hands while speaking with a smile, “If we were to fight, even I would not be able to beat him. Do you think he is a Dou Zhe?”

Tsk tsk, a Dou Zhe at such a young age. Even in Jia Nan Academy, that is considered to be one of the top talents. Heh heh, Yu er, it seems you have quite a good taste. But he is your cousin, isn’t he? Why don’t you let us have him?” The beautiful lady’s laughingly teased.

“Get lost you lewd woman!”

With a red face, Xiao Yu pushed the girl away. In her heart, Xiao Yu muttered without reason, “I have already said. There are no blood ties between him and me...”

The sudden appearance of her heartfelt feelings caused the tip of Xiao Yu’s ears to scald. She quickly scolded herself before calming her feelings, not daring to let her imagination run wild.

Compared to the laughter on Xiao Yu’s side, Luo Bu’s face was becoming increasingly gloomy. He coldly stared at Xiao Yan as the corner of his mouth twitched.

“I do not need to go out now, do I?” Carelessly pulling down his sleeves, Xiao Yan looked at Luo Bu and smiled faintly.

“haha, You seem to have some hidden skills.” Hiding the coldness on his face, Luo Bu once again displayed a radiant smile. Walking forward, he patted Xiao Yan’s shoulders in a seemingly friendly manner as he coldly whispered, “Little boy, you had better not be too impudent. Although you possess some talent, there are many in Jia Nan Academy who are more outstanding than you. With your attitude, you will find yourself in an unfavourable situation in Jia Nan Academy.”

“Thanks for your reminder.” Nodding his head with a smile, Xiao Yan said, “But I believe that you do not possess such qualifications”

Xiao Yan was no fool. Luo Bu’s enmity toward him was something he clearly understood. Therefore, there was no need to act ignorant in front of him. Even if they were to fight, Xiao Yan was not afraid of him. If he were to be more annoyed... it was not as though it was the first time he killed someone and destroyed the corpse.

Although Luo Bu’s enmity towards him originated from a misunderstanding, Xiao Yan did not have the leisure mood to explain it away. Putting it in a less courteous manner, it was Luo Bu who did not possess the qualification for Xiao Yan to do so.

Moreover, Xiao Yu may have argued with him everyday but Xiao Yan did

not wish for her to be harmed by this two-faced hypocrite.

Listening to Xiao Yan's rude words, Luo Bu radiant smile once again dissolved into coldness. His cold eyes stared intently at Xiao Yan and his face twitched. The cold glint in his eyes seemed to imaginary slash Xiao Yan into multiple pieces.

Xiao Yan ignored the pointless visual assault. The indifferent smile on his delicate and handsome face was clearly better at giving others a good impression compared to the forceful pretentious hypocrite smile.

"Arrogant boy. When you start at Jia Nan Academy, I will take good care of you as your senior." Luo Bu clench his teeth and said with a cold smile.

Touching his face, Xiao Yan softly said, "I don't know about other things but if you continue your act, believe me, I am able to cause you to be unable to leave Wu Tan City."

Shrinking his eyes, the corner of Luo Bu's mouth twitched as he stared at the young man. Within those black eyes, he found a depth of indifference.

His body trembled without leaving a trace. When he looked into those chilly black eyes, Luo Bu actually felt a frightening coldness. This feeling was similar to the one he got when he faced a savage Mystical Wolf alone during his last mission.

Luo Bu covertly swallowed his saliva. The threatening words which were about to escape his mouth were also forcefully swallowed.

"Very good." Luo Bu heaved out a breath of air seemingly intent on expelling the embarrassing chill that he had felt. Clenching his teeth and nodding his head, he had already made a decision. If he had the opportunity, he would get someone to cultivate a 'good' relationship with this boy.

Indifferently staring at Luo Bu, Xiao Yan was considering whether to find an opportunity to let this guy vanish from Wu Tan City in order to avoid future trouble when a tender female voice from within the tent caused Xiao Yan to soften.

"Hehe, this little boy has quite a great talent. This time around, it looks

like I have found a treasure."

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